

# new masses

***EISLER:***

***Here Is  
My Story***

***DEFEND  
THE UNIONS!***

See page 3

***WHO RUNS  
TALMADGE?***

***by Virginia Gardner***



♪ OPEN THE DOOR, RICHARD! ♪

**FEBRUARY 18, 1947**

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# just a minute



IN THESE days when Red-baiting, like the words of that old Tin Pan Alley song, goes 'round and 'round—and comes out all over—it is good to come across *The Protestant*. We've just been going through our copy of the December-January issue of that magazine, which is edited by Kenneth Leslie. Here is a liberal voice which rings true in a field in which so many of the hymns that are sung are hymns of hate. Here is a lash of justice against the money-changers within the temple. Here is a clear recognition of the people's enemy—even when he is camouflaged in the flowing vestments of the church. And — most important — here is courage to fight him.

One of its editorials presents the magazine's program for today when "the Protestant wing of the Christian Front is wheeling into action on the world scene." It declares that "the time has come when liberals can no longer eat their cake and have it, when progressives can no longer pretend to fight reaction while keeping out of their gun-sights the chief bastion of reaction—the interfaith Christian Front."

On the subject of working together with the Communists—a crucial issue for progressive action—*The Protestant* speaks out with refreshing vigor. It declares that while it is non-Communist, "We may at times

make common cause with Communists and with many who are called Communists against the rise of fascism—as non-Communists did in Europe, but too late. . . . In taking this view we differ sharply from the writers of a series of articles in *Life* magazine who have called for a crusade against communism in exactly the same terms as that crusade was called throughout the period when Hitler was rising to power in Europe."

There are growing signs that many sections of the clergy and lay members of Protestantism are becoming skeptical of those like John Foster Dulles and Henry Luce who would lead them down the road to "holy war." The warm response to V. J. Jerome's article in NM of November 26 on this subject (available from us in a 5¢ pamphlet) is evidence of this trend. In *The Protestant* this movement has a splendid spokesman, a voice for the many who really believe in the brotherhood of man—and who want to do something more about it than merely render lip-service on Sunday.

WE CAN'T remember why, but our 8A class back in St. Paul selected John Masfield as Our Favorite Living Poet. Since then the bard has moved onward and

upward to greater honors; he became the poet laureate of England. We recalled our youthful judgment when we read in the papers the other day that Masfield had composed an ode on the departure of the British royal family for a visit to South Africa. The verse commemorating this highlight of contemporary history was given:

*Most gracious Sovereign leaving England's shore,  
To bind your peoples by a link the more;  
Deign to accept from one the hopes of all  
That on your going happy fortunes fall;  
That on your journey blessed stars may burn  
And fair winds company your wished return.*

We made our choice; the record stands. Yet we couldn't help but reflect that we didn't do right by Rosemary Maguire, our own classmate, author of "To a Pussy-willow." We only selected her as Class Poet.

THEY'VE got an awful lot of coffee—and Communists—in Brazil. And Mr. William H. Lawrence of the *New York Times* went down to Latin America and came up with a series of six articles about the "menace of communism" on our sister continent. In an article which we will publish next week, Joseph Starobin tells how he met that worthy in Venezuela during his own reportorial tour of South America. Starobin, foreign editor of the *Daily Worker*, presents a vivid picture of the life and struggles of the people in those countries, and submits Lawrence's findings to a comparison with the facts.

L. L. B.

## new masses

established 1911

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|                                                                                                                                                                                  |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Defend the Unions! The Editors . . . . .                                                                                                                                         | 3  |
| My Side of the Story Gerhart Eisler . . . . .                                                                                                                                    | 4  |
| Portside Patter Bill Richards . . . . .                                                                                                                                          | 7  |
| Georgia: Repression and Revolt Virginia Gardner . . . . .                                                                                                                        | 9  |
| Moral Malady: an editorial John Stuart . . . . .                                                                                                                                 | 13 |
| I Find a New Landsman: a short story Yuri Suhl . . . . .                                                                                                                         | 14 |
| FM: Time Is Running Out: a guest editorial Eugene Konecky . . . . .                                                                                                              | 17 |
| How the Freedmen Fought for Land W. H. King . . . . .                                                                                                                            | 18 |
| Tom Paine on Trial Milton Blau . . . . .                                                                                                                                         | 21 |
| Book Reviews: Marxism and Poetry, by George Thomson: S. Finkelstein; The Seventh of October, by Jules Romains: T. C. Foxx; Black Anger, by Wulf Sachs: Alphaeus Hunton . . . . . | 22 |
| "All My Sons" Isidor Schneider . . . . .                                                                                                                                         | 28 |
| Art Joseph Solman . . . . .                                                                                                                                                      | 29 |

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# ***Defend the Unions!***

***by the Editors***

NOTHING in the stars requires a *bierhaus* for fascism's birth nor the stormtrooper to carry it to power. Its birthplace may as well be the legislative hopper as the Yorkville saloon. The clerk in Congress may quietly mount the rostrum, calmly adjust his specs, drone through the bill, count the ayes and noes, and you may wake up one morning to discover that the first dreadful measures of a native fascism have been clamped upon America.

The threat of fascism arrives before its *fuehrer*, and America's Hitler need not have a Charlie Chaplin mustache. The peril bursts upon you once the men at the controls of capitalism decide to destroy labor's strength. Remember: once they crushed German labor, the fate of every democrat was sealed. The decision to crush American labor has been made: the torrent of anti-labor bills in Congress is ample proof. Wall Street has cast its die, determined to turn the clock back a century, to destroy the Wagner Act, to hem labor in from every side; and democracy faces, therefore, an onslaught more violent than any time this century. For if labor goes down, so do you.

We address ourselves here primarily to the middle-class professional, to the liberal, to all who aspire to restore the Roosevelt pattern. Your efforts to weld a democratic coalition will succeed only to the degree that labor is unfettered. Remember: the greatest power of the Roosevelt coalition, its heyday, came in the stormy period of labor's growth—the years that saw the birth and progress of the CIO, the swelling of the AFL ranks, the advancement of Negro labor's status. All this gave backbone and muscle to the liberal coalition that produced the New Deal.

For labor's good is the national good. The workingmen, as Lincoln said—and it can stand repetition—must be “the basis of all governments, for the plain reason that they are the most numerous.” And more: they are the producers. It must be clear to all (except the purblind trusts) that our mass production economy hinges upon labor's buying power. The workingmen are the foundation of our economy and our civilization. The merchant, the professional, the doctor, all whose livelihood is contingent upon the status of the average man, benefit by labor's advancement—economically, socially, politically. Only the men of the trusts wantonly disregard these truths. They conspire for a pulverized working class, feeble, down-trodden, reduced to the status of unthinking human machines that will blindly grind out profits for the top few.

Hence the current spate of libels: organized labor is a monopoly (Senator Ball's top priority lie); the trade unions violate contracts; the closed shop is Hitleresque; the Wagner Act is unfair to the industrialist; higher wages produce inflation; labor is irresponsible, and so on *ad nauseum*.

Warp and woof of this is the frenetic Red-baiting orgy in Washington. The Big Lie against Gerhart Eisler leaps from the same brains that concoct the anti-labor crusade. It is all of a pattern: Hitler must be gleeful in Hell. Get the people hysterical about the “Red menace” and you can get away with murder. The Reichstag Fire—1947 version!

BEHIND all this is the NAM powerhouse. A recent issue of the *NAM News* declares arrogantly: “It is to be taken for granted that legislation will be passed to meet part of the problem—such as requiring unions to carry out their contracts, giving employers the right of free speech and dealing with jurisdictional strikes.” But this is small potatoes. Like Dickens' fat boy, they want more. “But whether Congress will prohibit industry-wide bargaining and abolish the closed shop is still in doubt.” So the brain-trusters for capitalism warn their henchmen: “The type of testimony (received at the hearings of the anti-labor bills) will determine their outcome.” They sound the bugle for a big business crusade. And, we must say, the land does not witness a counter-crusade in any degree as significant as that of the employers.

The greatest of all the Big Lies showering the land, and the most ironic, is that labor is a monopoly. This “stop thief” stratagem comes from the greatest monopolies themselves. As the CIO points out, the monopoly libel derives from the 250 largest corporations that control two-thirds of all manufacturing. Thirty-one, controlled by five big banking groups—Morgan, Rockefeller, Mellon, du Pont and Cleveland interests—“have a stranglehold on the nation's production.”

The specifics of their plan? To take the monopoly curse off themselves and to destroy the power of labor. They plot to reduce the trade unions to weak, ineffectual company union setups. If bargaining powers were limited to individual plants, the great national unions would be atomized. A century's trend would be reversed, that trend toward unifying wage standards and eliminating the claw-and-fang competition between localities.

The NAM, naturally, would continue operations on a national, industry-wide basis, and labor would be obliged to defend itself with scattered, divided, enfeebled legions.

This is but one aspect of the picture which NM shall, in forthcoming issues, fill in. But this much must be said now: time is perilously short, the hearings are on in Congress for the next three weeks. Three fateful weeks that determine the shape of the future. What are you doing to counter the NAM crusade? Have you written that letter, sent that telegram? Have you spurred on your neighbors, your associates, your union brothers, your community?

Time marches on the double-quick. What about you?

# MY SIDE OF THE STORY

*The following is abridged from the statement Gerhart Eisler would have made to the Un-American Activities Committee had he been permitted to. While the whole statement was distributed to the press, hardly any of it was published. The issues involved in this brazen example of persecution and smear are a challenge to the entire labor and progressive movement. It is also an example of Gestapo tactics. Eisler was never given the chance to answer the false charges made against him by stool pigeons and turncoats. Such is the "justice" practiced by the errand boys of the big money. Interestingly enough the day Eisler was gagged, the NAM urged a knock-down fight against "spreaders of unrest"—meaning anyone opposed to the NAM's way of life. No honest person is safe as long as the Un-American Committee exists. Insist that your congressmen press for its dissolution. Wire Attorney General Tom Clark demanding that Eisler be released from custody and allowed to return home.*

—THE EDITORS.

**M**R. CHAIRMAN, GENTLEMEN: As the new season of Red-hunting has opened today, let me tell you, or try to tell you, at the beginning: I am not a spy; not a foreign agent; not the "boss" of the Reds in this or any other country, and I never did anything to harm the American people for which I have a great deal of sympathy. I am a German Communist, a political refugee, wanting to go home.

I understand that this committee is a very interesting and remarkable American experiment in political inquisition and persecution. The people everywhere in the world, and especially we progressive Europeans, look at this experiment partly with bewilderment, and partly, to say it frankly, with contempt. And I repeat the word contempt.

This committee is supposed to investigate so-called un-American activities. You know, of course, that there are quite a few Americans who have very different ideas of what are un-American activities. There are even outstanding Americans who consider such a committee as yours a dis-

**Hounded by witch-hunters, slandered by the press, an anti-Nazi refugee hits back.**

**By GERHART EISLER**

grace to American democratic traditions. But this question is not for me to decide. It is a matter for Americans who know better than I the great democratic traditions of their country for which I have a great respect.

As far as I am concerned, I am a foreigner, a German anti-fascist, I am not an American, and I never had the intention of becoming an American. I never had the ambition, nor would this be possible, to behave exactly like an American, or a Russian—or a Greek, for that matter. So a somewhat dogmatic interpretation could easily classify everything I did, said or wrote as un-American. In this sense ninety-five percent of the people of the world who are not Americans, and have no intention of becoming Americans, are un-American. But naturally you cannot investigate the whole world, although someone here may dream of the century of the investigated man, the century of the Un-American Activities Committee. The investigation of 140,000,000 Americans alone would be quite a job.

So if you accuse me of not looking upon the world with the eyes of an American, and especially with your eyes, you are definitely right. I look upon the world with the eyes of a German Communist, guided by the principles of a German Communist, which I did not change and would not sell even if I should become an Assistant Professor at some American university after having been instructed, or to use the language of sport, after having been fixed.

Whatever ignoramus says about Communists, a Communist's first love is his country. And that is the reason why I, a German Communist, can agree with you if you call me un-American. You see, it cannot be helped: there are people who are not Americans and who have their own ways of life.

Having said this, I must add very emphatically: From all this follows by no means that I am anti-American. The Nazis were anti-American, anti-Russian, anti-French, anti-Polish; in short they were against all non-German peoples. As a German Communist, I am in sympathy with all the peoples in the world. I may dislike American or Spanish reaction, but never the American or Spanish people. And in the war against Hitler Germany my heart, my full sympathy and all my activities were on the side of the heroic soldiers of the American people and their great allies. Your selective service classified me as too old to become a soldier in your army. But if they had taken me I would not have fought badly, because if I am convinced a cause is righteous, I am not a bad fighter. I became an air raid warden, I got a citation for faithful service, and I gave blood to the blood bank.

But all the time I never would have become an American agent, I would have remained, as I remained a German Communist, hoping and hoping, as I did, that the Germans would liberate themselves from the Hitler dictatorship and end this criminal war—a hope which unfortunately did not come true.

Before Hollywood makes a picture called *The Song of Budenz*, they should make sure about him [Louis Budenz]. Because he ain't a saint, and he lies like the devil. I do not know whether he has started to love his enemies, as the Bible prescribes, but he sure tries to stab his former political friends in the back; you know, in the way of Judas Iscariot. *I never met that man Budenz, I never had the intention to meet him; I never sent Budenz a letter, a note, an article, even a word. All he has told you about this is nothing but lies, inventions and provocations.* Certainly, I could have met him by accident, as I met other people. But of all the misfortunes I had in my life, this misfortune did not hit me.

**B**UT now let me tell you how it happened that I am here in the United States. Budenz told you I am not a genuine political refugee, and I

came to the United States to boss all the Reds. What are the facts? In 1939, shortly before the outbreak of the war, I with many thousand other anti-fascist refugees got arrested in Paris. The men of Munich who ruled France at that time, and were leading France into disaster, arrested us because we were genuine anti-fascists. In their prisons and concentration camps, especially in the infamous camp of Vernet, we were beaten, starved, abused, and not a few of us were killed. Then the Nazi armies started to overrun France. To all the misery we suffered the danger arose that we would be extradited to Hitler Germany, in order to be tortured and killed.

In these critical days there came help. The former president of Mexico, General Cardenas, sent to many of us, myself included, an invitation to come to Mexico as a sanctuary. The diplomatic representatives of Mexico in France intervened strongly in our behalf. Also many decent Americans demanded from Vichy the right for refugees of all creeds and political opinions to leave France. Maybe even Budenz wrote at that time articles in support of us, anti-fascist refugees in France—I did not look through the files of the *Daily Worker* of those years.

As a result of this pressure, I and many others were sent from Vernet to another concentration camp near Marseilles, to prepare for our departure for Mexico. The Mexican consul general in Marseilles, Mr. Bosquez, gave me and other refugees Mexican substitutes for a passport. But there were new difficulties. No boat left from Marseilles directly to Mexico at that time. And very few French boats sailed at all, because the British captured the boats of Vichy France. The French authorities did not want to grant us exit permits to leave for Mexico, except under the condition of having ascertained also transit visas through the United States.

For months we tried in vain to secure transit visas through the United States. The American consul general at first blocked our journey to Mexico by refusing us transit visas. The French authorities threatened to send us back to Vernet, which meant into the hands of the Gestapo.

At last, the American consul general in Marseilles granted me and other refugees, among them Communists of different countries, transit visas. But

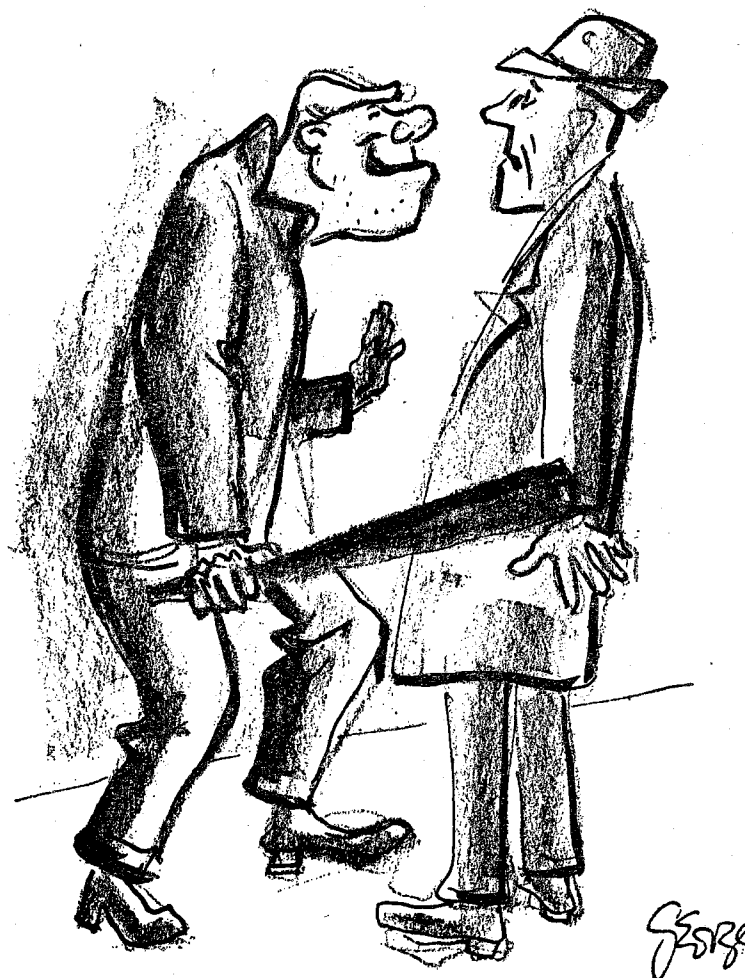
we were told we would not be allowed to go ashore in the United States, which was perfectly all right with us. Those among us who were Communists were advised by men who knew the immigration laws of the United States not to write into the application forms for a transit visa that we were Communists, because that would have made it technically absolutely impossible for the consul general to grant us even a transit visa.

In the choice between death at the hands of the Nazis and not writing in those application forms that we were Communists, I and other Communists of different lands chose the latter. But I never denied in the United States that I am a Communist. I am proud to be one.

WHAT would every one of you have done in such a situation? What would a Budenz have done? Well, maybe he would have gone over to the Nazis as a solution. In any case, I do not think there would be a jury in this country which would call this perjury and declare me guilty.

The FBI, the Justice Department, the Immigration Authorities, the State Department—they all knew about these facts for many years. They didn't do anything about it; they granted me at the end of July, 1946, an exit permit. Apparently they are not convinced, like Budenz—that so-called Christian—that a German anti-fascist would rather die at the hands of the Nazis than violate the red tape of the immigration laws of the US.

Finally, in the middle of May, 1941, I and many others left from Marseilles for Martinique. And—despite Budenz' lies—as refugees in the most ordinary sense of the word. Alas, as it so often happens in times of war, something new happened to us. We were not very far from Martinique when our boat was captured by a Dutch cruiser and brought to Trinidad in the West Indies. Again we came into a concentration camp, where we were carefully screened by the British military authorities. They were not interested in whether someone was a Communist, Social Democrat or a Catholic; all they wanted to know was



"Relax, Mac. I ain't no Red."

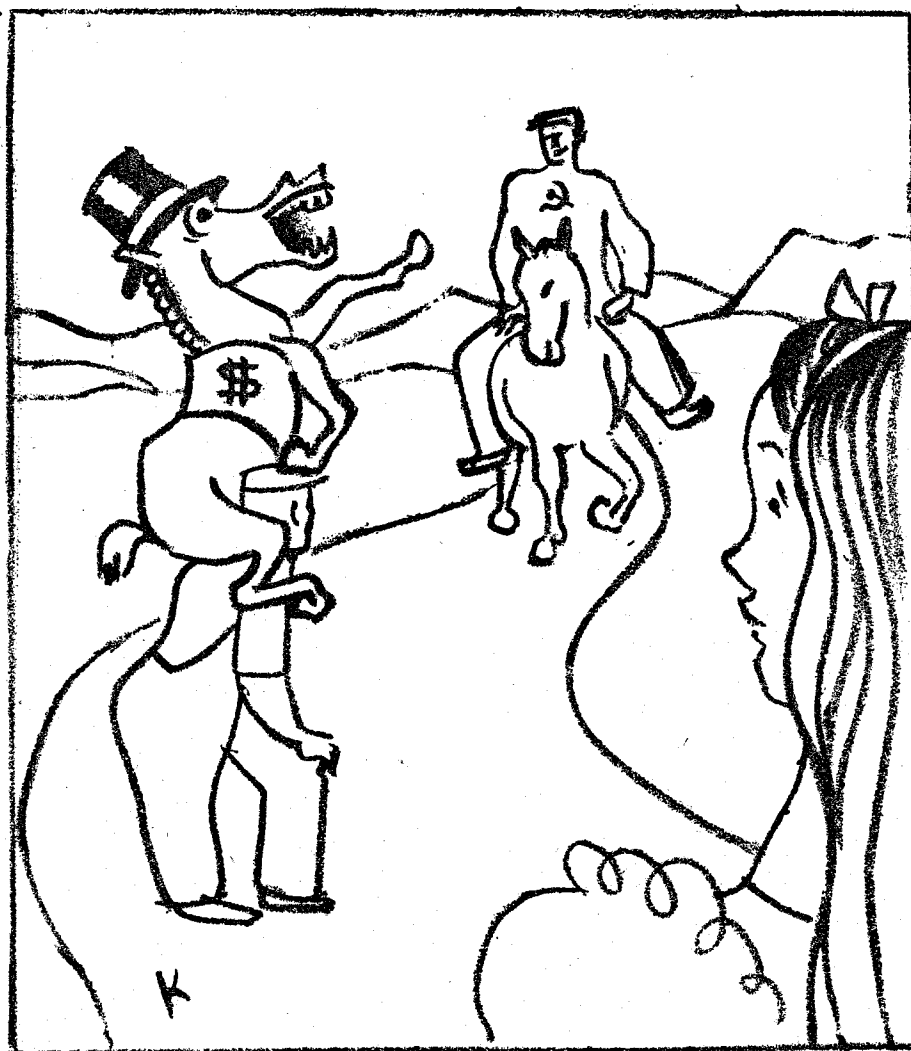
whether we were genuine German anti-fascists. Those recognized as such, I included, were allowed to leave.

But again the old trouble. No boat from Trinidad to Mexico. We had to take an American boat for New York and change there for Mexico. I, like many others, took such a boat. And so I arrived on June 13, 1941, in New York.

I and a group of political refugees who were heading for Mexico were brought to Ellis Island. Those who were Yugoslavs, Hungarians, Czechs, were allowed to proceed with the next boat to Mexico. Those of us who were Germans or Austrians had to remain in Ellis Island, and were not allowed to travel to Mexico. There existed an emergency law, directed against German Bundists and Italian Fascists, prohibiting their departure from the United States to any Latin-American country during the war, in order to continue from there their harmful activities in favor of the fascists. This law, unfortunately, did not make any distinction between German and Italian anti-fascists. So I and other German anti-fascists had to stay two and one-half months in Ellis Island, till the American authorities decided what to do with us. Finally I was released on bail with the right to stay in this country for sixty days. During these sixty days I asked again for permission to go to Mexico. But again this was refused. And so I had to stay here during the war, whether I liked it or not, and as a refugee in the ordinary sense of the word.

During that time my transit visa was changed into a visitor's visa. On May 25, 1945; I repeat, on May 25, 1945, at once after the downfall of the Hitler regime, I with seventeen other German anti-fascist refugees applied to the State Department for permission to return to Germany. This was refused. Time and again we repeated our plea without success. We applied to all other embassies of the occupying powers—for a long time without success.

The State Department granted me on July 31, 1946, an exit permit. Before it was granted the FBI questioned me for many hours. Unfortunately, it was only in October that I was able to get a place on a boat. I was to sail on October 18, 1946. My baggage was already cleared and partially on the boat when on October 16 I found out by accident that my exit permit was cancelled, without any rea-



Konzal.

"Heavens!" cried the Horse to Alice. "Here comes a man riding a Horse!"

son given. But I found out soon that Budenz and your committee had been the reason.

Well, gentlemen, that is how it happened that I am in this country. All I told you is a matter of official record, all documents are in my possession, and all the authorities, the FBI, the State Department, and the Immigration authorities know that it is so.

WHAT did I do during my enforced stay in this country? Whatever it was, I am alone responsible for it. No government of any state, neither the Vatican, Great Britain, nor the Soviet Union or any international organization had anything to do with any of my activities.

Being by profession a journalist and writer, I tried to put my pen in the service of the Allies. Soon after the entrance of the United States into the war, the late Dr. Kurt Rosenfeld, former Prussian Minister of Justice, and for many years a member of the Social Democrat faction of the German Reichstag, founded — together

with other Americans—the German-language paper the *German-American*. He asked me if I would write regularly for the *German-American*, despite the fact that it is not a Communist paper. The main purpose of this paper was to counteract Nazi and Bundist influences among German-Americans, and convince them of the necessity of the total defeat of Hitler and to support the war effort of the Allies. I agreed readily and became a voluntary staff writer on the *German-American*, where I wrote my articles unsigned and signed. After the death of Rosenfeld the trade unionist, Gustav Faber, became the editor-in-chief, and he asked me to continue my work, which I did.

And now I come to Hans Berger. This terrible Hans Berger! What is the story of Hans Berger? Budenz and a few people of his type have made quite a living by telling stories about Hans Berger.

I was asked by Mr. Joseph Starobin, foreign editor of the *Daily Worker*, whether I would be ready to write

from time to time about my German and European experiences. Under normal conditions I would have done it. I would have written under my name. But it was war. I was a German, a Communist, in a country whose authorities don't like their own Communists very much, and foreign Communists still less. I didn't want to have any scandal. I didn't want to give to the professional Red-baiters in this country any ammunition for raising hell, and so I was not in favor of writing, especially under the extraordinary war conditions, articles for the Communist press.

But I agreed readily to give my material, my ideas and my knowledge, especially about German and European questions, to Mr. Starobin for whatever use he would like to make of them.

Many other refugee journalists did this and many American journalists accepted such help. I don't want to mention any names, but I could. Mr. Starobin did not like my proposal. He is a young, but very able and ambitious journalist, and he did not want to write and sign articles for which he had not done all the work himself. You may believe it or not, such journalists and even politicians exist. So we finally made a compromise. Whenever he used my material, my research and some of my ideas he would write the articles under the pen name of Hans Berger. He proposed this German sounding name because ninety percent of all the Hans Berger articles dealt with Germany. In many cases I saw the articles only after they were printed. Not always, of course, did I agree with everything that was written in these articles. But the articles were his responsibility and in general they were good.

But to the newly-instructed or fixed Budenz, a refugee like me, who can think on his own and can write, and has political interests, and can even sometimes give good material and intelligent ideas to an American journalist—such a man cannot be a genuine refugee. So Budenz shouts for the police, denounces me as a foreign agent, and writes a few well-paid slandering articles in the Hearst press, known for its human kindness to dogs and rabbits and its bestial attitude towards progressive human beings.

I want to repeat at this point again that it is not true that I came to this country as a so-called agent of the Communist International. The Communist International was dissolved in

1943 in form and in fact, despite what Budenz says. The Communist International was never an illegal organization and does not exist as an illegal organization now.

A Communist Party is not a conspiracy; it acts in the open. Only where reaction makes open political work impossible by suppressing all civil liberties does the Communist Party go underground. Under Himmler nobody was fool enough to stand up to be counted as a Communist in order to make it easier for the Gestapo to find him out, to torture and to kill him, and to deprive his family of all means of existence. To make this still clearer I will give you another example. If, for instance, Mr. Rankin should demand that the Negroes in Georgia stand up to be counted, they would do this only if they were sure that to stand up would not mean to be lynched.

I do not want to give a lecture here in Marxism, although it could do no harm. Having read the record of Budenz's testimony I have found out that you know nothing about Marxism, about the principles and ideas of the Communists. And I think it would not be bad, even if you don't like Marxists and Communists, to really know what they stand for, especially if you think about persecuting them. In such cases it is better to go to the sources than to the turncoats. Nobody would have asked Benedict Arnold to be a specialist of the ideas of the American Revolution and to write its history. Nobody should consult a fanatical Mohammedan if he wants to learn the truth about Christianity. And nobody who wants to know the truth about Communists should listen to a Budenz.

I am nobody's agent and nobody's spy. I took orders from nobody, nobody tried to give me orders, I gave nobody orders, and nobody took any orders from me; nobody, no men who became scoundrels, and no men who remained decent.

I have nothing to do with the policy of the American Communist Party, for which, as a German Communist, I have brotherly sympathy. Its leaders did not ask me for my advice, and I did not give them any advice.

If you have listened to me without too much bias, you will stop the persecution against me, and let me go in peace back to where I came from. Germany needs every anti-fascist in the fight for a new, peaceful, democratic Germany.

## portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

*News Item: Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin says that landlords clamoring for the removal of rent controls don't care about the money but resent not being able to get rid of undesirable tenants.*

Speaking as the average landlord I want to say that money isn't everything. A large income, low taxes, and a big bank account are just as important.

If I could just get rid of my undesirable tenants I wouldn't even have to think about money. Half of them have children. The baby carriages clutter up the furnace room which could easily be rented to veterans. There are three or four families that keep pestering me for heat during cold spells. Any desirable tenant would go to Florida for the winter.

Most of my present tenants are too noisy. There is always a terrific clamor every time I try to evict a family for refusing to share maintenance expenses. You can see what a racket that is.

Most of them are always complaining about the condition of the house. Actually the apartments aren't as bad as they're painted. These undesirables want to know why I don't repair the vestibule. They don't seem to realize that I have to maintain a lot of lobbies in Washington.

The ingrate in 3E claims he had to hock the table he used to pay me under. I'd like to see him find two better rooms for \$100 a month. The only thing landlords want today is the right to choose their tenants. We don't worry about money as long as people can pay the rent we ask.

●  
*Postmaster Bob Hannegan's doctors have told him that he can keep working if he slows up. All he has to do is keep pace with the Democratic Party.*

●  
The trial of the Japanese war criminals is expected to last another eight months. The defendants have evidently been sentenced to die of old age.

●  
*Bilbo has been named one of America's ten worst-dressed men. His clothes are almost as unsightly as his Senate record.*

## Dear Reader:

**D**OWN here in Georgia, it has been refreshing to see reporters who made no pretense about being impartial. Almost all of them I talked to were passionately excited about what was happening, were full of contempt for Herman Talmadge. The day that the liberal columnist, Ralph McGill, came out with a pusillanimous column defending Talmadge's legal right to the governorship, the men on the same newspaper went about shamefaced and miserable, making no effort to rally to his defense when others made jibes.

But in Washington, where men are sent from their home towns who know without asking the thinking of the front office, the pundits sit in the inner sanctum of the National Press Club, I am told, smoke their pipes and become judicial. Now, women are not allowed in this Jim Crow realm, but my scouts tell me that today the men who drained their whiskey glasses and solemnly reassured one another Roosevelt would not last forever are, strangely enough, again morose. It seems that they are worried. They fear the buoyant Republicans are "going too far."

And there is the other kind of reporter, too, who sees crumbling the slim bastions built against the onslaughts of monopoly capital in the New Deal days, and sees labor's rights, including his own hard-won right to organize, imperiled. One of them approached me recently and slipped five bucks into my coat pocket. "You make me feel like a banker," he grumbled, "and I remember how we felt about bankers in the Hoover breadline days. I know you'll give it to NEW MASSES—and they need it. Well, it must be a luxury to work for an outfit like that and be able to tell the truth."

In these days of gathering storm, the people's press stands as the only beacon of truth for the working class and its allies. The monopolists and the nasty little men of the Un-American Activities Committee are doing everything they can to kill it off. Do you want to see it engulfed, too, in the cultural swamp of Hoover Republicanism, do you want to see it strangled by lack of funds? Or are you willing to stand up and refuse to be intimidated by the brazen men who claim that in America no press should exist unless it is owned by the big corporations?

Let your answer be clear—a contribution to NEW MASSES today.

VIRGINIA GARDNER.

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### HERE'S MY ANSWER:

To NEW MASSES, 104 East 9th Street, New York 3, N. Y.

\$..... is enclosed as my initial contribution.

IN ADDITION, I want to pledge \$..... so that NEW MASSES can fully cover its planned budget. (Please indicate the date or dates of your pledged donations.)

PLEDGE DATE(S) .....

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CITY ..... ZONE ..... STATE .....

# GEORGIA: REPRESSION AND REVOLT

Atlanta, Ga.

**T**HE visitor who sees the hill country of Georgia, even from a train window, is struck by one of the poignant paradoxes of this state—a state full of hope and movement, of repression and revolt. For these farm people one glimpses, who provide the main mass support for the Talmadge dictatorship—against which a wide section of the citizenry is in arms—are themselves the pitiful victims of the decaying feudal system which Talmadge is trying so desperately to perpetuate.

In the beautiful hills of Georgia, mountain country whose incomparable loveliness brought a nostalgic ache to the throat of this reporter for the pineclad, ever-changing slopes of the Arkansas Ozarks, the farms are small and poor, terribly poor. Here, as in the remote districts of the Ozarks, the same ragged but beautiful children stood waving at the train before unpainted houses and cabins with sagging timbers. Here was the same absence of livestock—even chickens. A white farmer driving a cow home at dusk was a rarity. In Georgia there is not a cow to be found on 71,000 farms. More common was the sight of a Negro or white sharecropper driving, instead of a tractor, one mule

**The plot to keep Talmadge in power was hatched in the office of railroad lawyers.**

**By VIRGINIA GARDNER**

hitched to a plough or rake, etched against a steep hillside whose peach trees were planted in terraces to prevent the soil being washed away. The Georgia farmer's cash income is \$100 less than the annual national average. And this state, where seventy percent of the population lives in rural sections, still does not feed itself.

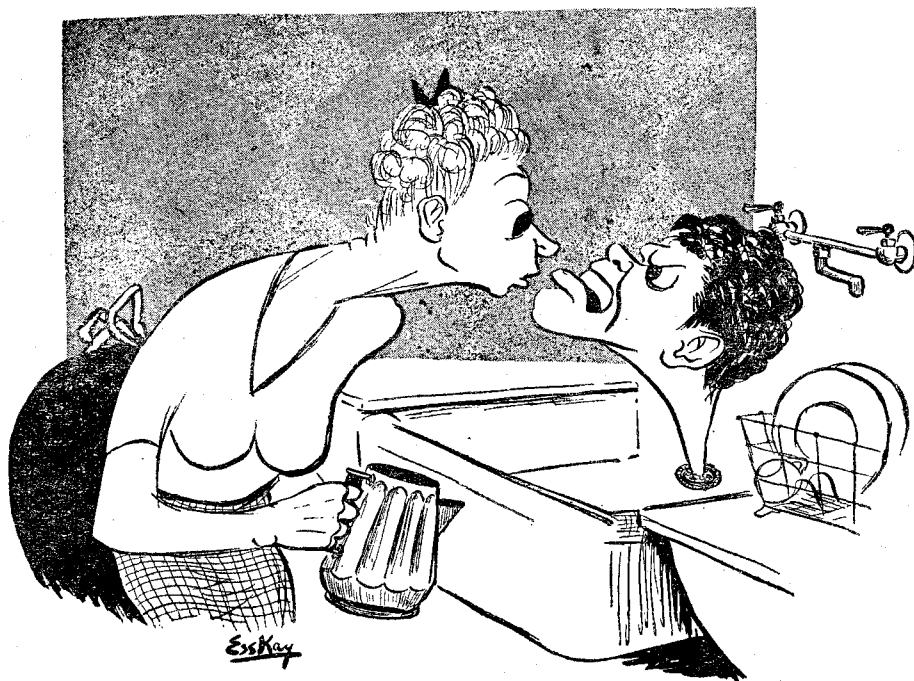
The orchards on perilous hillsides were cared for; and in the rich bottomlands the cotton was profuse. But absentee landlords bent on quick profits, together with the degrading sharecropper setup, tend to perpetuate the one-crop system—cotton—which has produced the same sterile played-out soil that the one-party system has produced politically.

Here and there, newly cut out of a hillside, with Georgia's red earth still bleeding in great gashes almost as if the shame of Georgia and its un-

avenged lynchings were seeping into its very soil, is the site of a small textile mill or other factory. At one of these, though the factory was in operation, construction at one end was still in progress. Negroes were hoisting lumber, Negroes were lifting sacks of sand, Negroes were standing in the clay sinking their picks in the soil so that pipes might bring running water—the running water which is absent on all but four percent of Georgia's farms. Meanwhile out of the entrance the skilled workers of the mill were emerging—and they were white.

It is still true in Georgia that the barons of industry have managed to keep black and white apart, for the most part. This is particularly true in textile, the state's main industry. Even in the war years the owners managed to run their mills here without employing many Negroes, except in inferior and largely segregated jobs. For even with the wages of mill workers below the national average, tenant farmers' cash income is so low that the factories can keep drawing on this potential labor surplus. It is only when farmers, labor and Negroes get together that decent wages will be paid and the stranglehold of the white supremacists broken. A small start in breaking down Jim Crow has been made by the CIO. But arrayed against it are the Talmadges and Roy Harrises, and behind them are the absentee owners, the Northern capitalists who control power, textile, rayon, lumber and much of the rest of Georgia's resources. They have a stake in race prejudice.

The problem presented to the unions in developing the natural ties of labor with the small farmers and the Negro workers and sharecroppers is made more difficult because the factories are small and scattered, many isolated in mountain regions. The labor value added to the raw product is not the highly skilled kind. Many work-shirts are produced, but few dress shirts. Georgia's beautiful oaks and pines cover twenty-two and a half million acres, more than those of any other state, but while she produces lumber and turpentine, there is little furniture, and not of the best. Her canneries are small and unorganized,



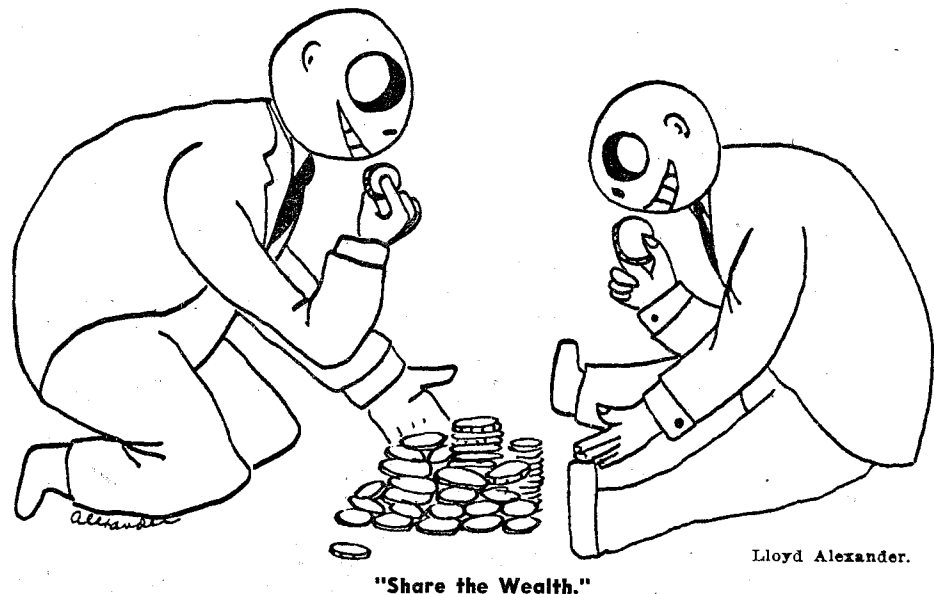
"If you don't stop throwing coffee-grounds down here, I'll have to find another place to live!"

and the Department of Labor says they are known for their child labor violations — possibly because the canneries are not subject to overtime provisions.

**W**ARTIME employment conditions improved the chances for political growth. Under the liberal administration of former Gov. Ellis Arnall, and through the efforts of the CIO and a politically militant Negro citizenry, Georgia made great strides. The Supreme Court decision in the Texas case that state-controlled primaries could not exclude Negroes was accepted by Arnall. The poll tax was repealed. And the Negroes did vote last year in the primary. The result was that Eugene Talmadge obtained 287,000 votes, with a majority over the white votes cast for the Arnall-sponsored progressive, James Carmichael. But in addition to the 200,000 votes cast by whites for Carmichael there were 114,000 cast by Negroes. Talmadge was on the short end of the popular vote, but still was the victor on the basis of Georgia's county unit system, a twenty-five-year-old law governing primaries which gives the rural counties far greater comparable voting strength than the urban counties, and allows a minority candidate to win.

But the feudal lords, the white supremacists, saw the handwriting on the wall. Three days before the primary of July 17, at the peak of a campaign in which the Talmadge forces, backed by the industrial barons who contributed legal talent and money, campaigned solely on the promise of a white primary and keeping Georgia "a white man's state," four Negroes in Monroe, Ga., were lynched. Just recently a Negro youth was beaten almost to death in an effort to make him reveal what he told a grand jury about the Monroe lynching. The Ku Klux Klan again was on the march in Georgia, and Gov. Arnall instituted a suit to oust it. Columbians, Inc., shirted like Hitler storm-troopers, brazenly appeared on the scene in Atlanta, dedicated to race terror and intimidation. Arnall instituted a suit against this organization.

It happened also that under Arnall a determined effort was initiated to wrest from Wall Street some small part of the profits drained off by Northern banks and industry and put it back into roads and schools and services for Georgia. Moreover, Ar-



nall himself argued the freight rate case against the Southern railway now before the Supreme Court. Even more than the rest of the South, Georgia for years has been a colony of Wall Street, because of differences in freight rates imposed by the Interstate Commerce Commission, preventing her industries from competing with those of the North, and because seven railroads had been milking the state of profits without paying taxes, due to legislation passed more than a century ago. The fact that much of her produce was lumber, coal and bulky materials made freight rates especially important.

With Talmadge in, the big employers, the representatives of absentee owners of industries, the suave lawyers in Atlanta and those few country lawyers in the Assembly who can be bought for "retainer fees," were safe. But Gene Talmadge was an old, sick man, and they were worried; so in the back rooms and the paneled law offices a plot was cooked up to insure the succession in event of his death. The results are well known.

Former Gov. Arnall, addressing a Montgomery, Ala., meeting after the death of Gene Talmadge and the subsequent seizure of power by his son Herman, charged that "this scheme to keep Talmadge forces in power" was "hatched in the office of railroad lawyers realizing that Georgia's anti-trust suit in the US Supreme Court must be stopped. If the late Gene Talmadge had lived, it is reported he had promised to dismiss the railroad suit and if Herman got in as governor, he would do likewise."

In my article of February 4 I re-

vealed how Roy Harris, brain-truster for Herman Talmadge, was spurred on to write the Democratic Party's platform last October for the repeal of all laws governing the primary. A resolution was passed reading out of the party any official who does not follow the orders of the convention in preparing ballots for a general election. Harris' was a double-barreled program. If the Negroes could be eliminated from the primary and Talmadge could dictate regulations for the general election, then Harris' own Cracker Party, which with him had gone down to defeat in Richmond County, might revive. Secondly, the Georgia Railroad Co., whose main office is in his home town of Augusta, might be gratified.

**T**HIS is the story of the Georgia Railroad:

In 1833 Georgia passed a statute virtually exempting the stock of the Georgia Railroad from taxation—except for a tax of not more than one-half of one percent of its net income. Meanwhile two others were so chartered, and the three lines leased properties to other railroads, which also claimed the exemptions. For the last hundred years the ablest lawyers of the state have been engaged in suing these railroads for the state in an effort to collect taxes, but none were successful. These suits were all on the basis of property taxes, however. When in 1931 the state income tax law was passed, the railroads immediately claimed exemption from that, too. But with Arnall's approval in 1945 Attorney General Eugene Cook, then Revenue Commissioner, assessed the

railroads at the request of Victor Davidson, Revenue Department counsel, on the income tax basis. The test case slated for argument before the Supreme Court in February involves the Atlantic Coastline Railroad, a lessee of the Georgia Railroad Co., and \$200,000 in taxes. At stake in all the kindred suits is from two to three million dollars.

Meanwhile M. E. Thompson, now Lieutenant-Governor-Elect, then revenue commissioner under Arnall, wrote to all the municipalities and county boards of the area through which the roads pass. With the income tax case decided favorably in the Georgia Supreme Court, he determined to go ahead with the effort to collect personal property taxes, and proposed that all of these bodies intervene on behalf of the state. All of them can levy taxes, and the schools of these poor rural counties would benefit most. Involved are counties peopled by one-half of the population of the whole state, Davidson told me. As the schools can levy up to \$15 on \$1,000 worth of property these cases, if successful, could mean much to Georgia schools, now and in the future—because if the decision is favorable it will be “binding forever.”

Every one of the counties and municipalities involved *except Augusta and Richmond Counties*, home of the Georgia Railroad Co. and of Roy Harris, agreed to intervene. The board of county commissioners of Richmond County where until the last election the Cracker Party was supreme, first agreed to intervene, then changed their decision. The commissioners all were Cracker Party men, and the party was dominated by Roy Harris.

**D**ESPITE the Cracker Party’s “in-difference” as to taxes, the poverty of many of Georgia’s rural counties is inseparable from the graft and corruption and sellouts of the people which are traditional in the state’s politics. The liquor and soft drink interests, the power interests and the railways long have reached into the Assembly through the vulnerability of many rural legislators. A man backed by the liquor interests can go a long way in Georgia—witness Rep. John Wood, erstwhile Un-American Committee chairman of the federal House. Or by power — Sen. Walter F. George, whom Roosevelt unsuccessfully sought to purge.

After years of witnessing graft and collusion and the most naked form of machine control and theft amounting to public rape, the people of Georgia are waking up. If you think, however, that being in the world spotlight has made the State House itself more prim and precise in its ways, you would be in error.

“Honey,” said a cab driver after we had discussed the usual topic, “don’t paint us too bad. The people of this state are goin’ to stop all this dictator stuff.” He paused, adding: “Have you seen Herman? Impotent little buzzard, ain’t he?” And he let me out at the State House.

Here in speeches this same concern over what the outside world was saying was reflected—but with a querulous note. Rep. Pierre Howard, one of Talmadge’s new-found supporters, distinctly not of the wool-hat variety but a member of one of Georgia’s old families and a protege of former Rep. Bob Ramspeck in Washington, was hurt. He didn’t think it fair that the press and radio had talked about liquor bottles littering the desks of legislators the night Talmadge was “elected.” In the Senate, Sen. Spence Grayson of Savannah, a foremost Talmadge leader who looks as if he had stepped out of an Abercrombie and Fitch ad, reads from a newspaper clipping. “It comes from a foreign state,” he says morosely. It was, indeed, from the *New York Times*. “We are perfectly competent to run our own affairs,” he says.

Up front the clerk of the House casually tips up a Coca-Cola bottle and drinks. Two stenographers in front of the presiding officer, resting from their labors, tip up their bottles of coke to their pretty noses. No liquor bottles are in evidence but many empty coke bottles are on many a desk. Cigars and cigarettes fill the air with smoke. Spittoons are handy. The galleries are filled to overflowing—with white faces. On the same floor I pass a restroom labelled “For White Ladies Only.”

Just outside the entrance to the House, where the soft Southern voices are blared out loudly via an amplifying apparatus, is a soft drink stand. Here, lolling with the inevitable Coca-Cola bottles and munching fried pork skins, are the wool-hat boys. Most of them I approached, however, proved to be not farmers but local officials, sheriffs and would-be office-holders. One of them, a sheriff, greeted a passerby



**Social Problem.**

servilely, then turning to me said proudly: “He’s a Talmadge man—richest man in Lawrence county, W. H. Lovett.” A man with a hat the size of a gallon jug explained himself: “Sen. L. T. Mitchell, from the Blue Ridge Mountains, first time here, sixty-nine years old, and I’ve been policeman, county bailiff, I’ve run a sawmill and traded hosses and mules, and I always fight for the underdog. I voted for Gene and I’ll go down with the boy. The people elected his daddy, and he killed hisself on the stump fightin’ for the white people of Georgia. Before they vote the n—s should be taught a heap more education than I got.”

The old Senator probably reflects rural white sentiment (after all, in forty-nine of Georgia’s 159 counties it is the Negroes who are in a majority) but he does not reflect even that entirely. Among the letters protesting the Talmadge coup published in the *Atlanta Journal* was one from Gus Hall of Calhoun saying in part:

“Two recent happenings in my beloved state have caused me to bow my head in shame. The first was the failure of the courts and the FBI to find and punish the murderers of the four Negroes in a certain section of our state. The second is the contemptible squabble about who is to be governor of Georgia. . . . We of the north Georgia hills know very little about political maneuvering and wire-pulling. We know that the only fair, sensible thing to do is let the people, the majority of the people, say who is to be our chief executive.”

The Talmadge crew figured that if he talked loudly enough about white supremacy he could count on race hatred, or intimidation of the large section which opposes race hatred but

is traditionally timid and inexperienced organizationally, to cover up the sinister plot by which he seized power. The spontaneous uprising of the people in community mass meetings, people who are saying in effect that they will not stand for corruption and violence in the name of protecting their "supremacy," shows that Talmadge guessed wrong.

"I am reminded," said a gallant little woman, Mrs. Julia Collier Harris, who said she had long been in the midst of a fight for progress made by the League of Women Voters in Atlanta, Columbus and elsewhere, "of the time we organized the Association for the Prevention of Lynching here twenty-five years ago. We issued a statement saying we were tired of men defending lynching under the guise of protecting our virtue. 'We'll take care of that ourselves,' we said. Of course the Southern papers would not use it, but it was printed elsewhere, and the men were furious."

Mrs. Harris was the managing editor and her husband, Julian LaRose Harris, the son of Joel Chandler Harris, was the editor of a newspaper in Columbus, Ga., which in the twenties was awarded the Pulitzer prize for its work in fighting the Klan. Today's movement against the Talmadge coup Mrs. Harris described as "a plowing up of all the earth" in Georgia. Mr. Harris, for many years correspondent for the *New York Times*, said that the entire Talmadge gang should be "cleaned out." He warned that the general election as well as the primary would be manipulated by Talmadge officials if the legislature follows his dictates. And he made the point that the Negroes were better equipped to vote than many whites in Georgia because in the years when the old "grandfather clause" was on the statute books they set out to qualify themselves and conducted a campaign against illiteracy. "I'm perfectly sat-

isfied with the decision of the Supreme Court," said Mrs. Harris.

WHILE the labor movement is on record against the white primary, due to its weaknesses in Georgia it is not providing leadership to the militant middle-class groups who are revolting from the Talmadge coup because it outrages their sense of law and order. "The answer is organization," Charles Gillman, head of the state CIO, told me. "The most effective thing that has been done to combat race prejudice in Georgia is the joint meetings we have." This does not explain, however, why Charles Matthias, CIO Steelworkers leader, speaking at a big protest rally, said nothing about the white primary—or the CIO.

There was a time when the Knights of Labor organized in the South along interracial lines and included small farmers. The US Dept. of Labor's October *Monthly Labor Review* on the South tells how in 1888 the Knights had 112 assemblies organized in Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina which wrote in to the Knight's weekly journal. Forty-seven said their members were mainly farmers, three had mostly cotton mill hands, and sixty-two either had a mixture of farmers and artisans or did not declare their composition. Some included both Negro and white workers, and a number only Negroes. It was officially opposed to racial discrimination. (In Augusta, Ga., Harris' home town, "some 4,000 mill workers were out for about two months in an unsuccessful labor dispute.") The Knights "participated actively in politics in some areas," said the *Review*.

While all three of the new members of the House from Chatham County, where the CIO has some strength, voted against Talmadge, the delegation from Atlanta's county, Fulton, was split. One of the Atlanta men who went down the line for Talmadge and whom the CIO unsuccessfully opposed in last year's election was Rep. Cicero Kendrick, editor of the *AFL Journal of Labor* and for ten years "labor's own" representative in the House — except for those loyalties reputedly claimed by the Georgia Power Co. When I went looking for him in the offices of the labor publication I was told: "Mr. Kendrick represents both labor and industry. He's not one-sided that-a-way."

Sure enough, I found Rep. Kend-

rick anything but one-sided. He spoke of the "splendid relations between management and labor in this state." As chairman of the Industrial Relations Committee of the House he found he could "sit down across the table with management and labor" and agree on legislation by common consent. Roy Harris, who for years worked with him in these matters, is his good friend, and I am reliably informed it was Harris who got him to vote for Herman.

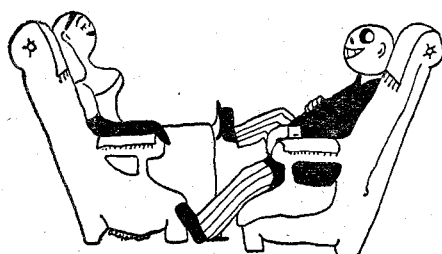
"It was the first time I ever voted for a Talmadge," Kendrick said to me. I told him I understood that the first vote was crucial; it was on whether to canvass the votes that had been cast for governor and would have been a tie if Kendrick had voted the other way. "Well," he said, as if to justify everything, "they had it fixed so that if they didn't get that number, just a difference of one, then a couple of others would have swung in there with their votes. They wanted to vote the way they did for the record, but they was all ready to change if needed. And if they didn't, a couple of others were ready to. It was all figured out."

Rep. Kendrick doesn't think it does any good for unions to appear before legislative committee—it just antagonizes the legislators. "Frankly I get what I accomplish done through friendship," he said. "We've held off a lot of bad labor bills until now. I figure it's my job to keep industry and labor workin' together and I make it my business to see that it stays that way."

Later I learned that in his zeal to keep it that way he advised striking AFL streetcar men to accept a far poorer settlement than they eventually did accept.

I asked him about the pending white primary bill which had just been introduced. "Oh, I'm against the white primary," he said. "They expect me to be." He sounded very tired. I suppose by "they" he meant the 50,000 members he said the AFL had in Atlanta alone.

Gillman of the CIO had told me he hoped there would be another party formed in Georgia with an "entirely different group" at the helm. If this occurs, as well it might, it is to be hoped that the CIO will be in on the ground floor giving leadership. It is certain the AFL will not. In the meantime both AFL and CIO will be left in the background if they don't start moving.



Alexander.

Bourgeois Love Affair.

# MORAL MALADY

An Editorial by JOHN STUART

THESE past months I have been fascinated by newspaper reports of dead men and women who leave their eyes for those whose sight is gone or have little vision left. The transplantation of corneas is a great surgical achievement. And I sometimes ask myself in moments when fantasy pulls hard what would happen if the eyes of Jean Herve, the dead Maquis, or the eyes of Victor Rudenko, the dead Red Army man—or those of Sime Lackovic, a Yugoslav Partisan fallen in battle—were transferred to people here who suffer from the dread malady of healthy eyes that will not see.

I am brought to this fantasy again by the cable published in the Social Democratic *New Leader* and sent to Ernest Bevin by a not too strange agglomeration of Vatican satellites, Protestants of the Dulles persuasion, bourbon Social Democrats, Republican factotums and professional slanderers who live by character assassination and backstairs intrigue. The cable, signed by seventy of them, asks Mr. Bevin not to heed Henry Wallace in his effort for a more equitable foreign policy. Mr. Wallace's "position on foreign policy comes from a small minority of Communists, fellow-travelers and what we call here totalitarian liberals." Thus they wired Bevin.

For the moment not too much need be said about them. What must be said immediately about this interlocking directorate of Henry Luce, Max Eastman, John Dewey, A. A. Berle, Norman Thomas, Bishop Manning and the Very Rev. Robert Gannon (to choose just a few of the names) is that it is symptomatic of a great moral blindness which no flawless cornea can correct. Minds diseased by anti-Soviet obsessions infect the moral atmosphere in which a country lives and the victims unfortunately are not the original carriers of the disease but many men and women who confuse the disease with health. It has become the vogue to say that he is a Communist or fellow-traveler who believes in taking a road other than that which led to World War II. It has become the vogue to attribute to Communists what intelligence and painful experience dictate. Thus are the Communists perversely honored—while those who out of their own hard thought come to parallel conclusions are impaled on the Red-baiters' pike to be scorned and jeered.

And this is but part of the moral blindness. The chronicler of our day who will work in the future with a new social cornea will look back aghast that many people should have learned so little in so long a time, that the agony of the Europe of the Thirties should not have had greater impact for the America of the late Forties. The intellectual terror which comes from a dying order desperately holding on is nothing new in the long story of history. But one need not wade through the past to see the counterparts of Henry Luce in Hitler's Reich or the foreign counterparts of those American Social Democrats who sold their country with the same *elan* as the men who really owned it. Shall we forget Vaino Tanner, the leader of the Finnish Social Democratic Party who bought security and favor from the Nazis by supporting their war? Shall we forget Henri de Man, the head of the Belgian Social Democrats who fought the Communists and then joined the Nazis in 1940? Shall we forget the deputies of the French Socialist Party who, after helping to drive the Communists underground, voted Petain special powers to establish fascist rule at Vichy?

Ilya Ehrenburg has said of us that our memories are too short. He may be right. But to me it is not so much that our memories are short but that we are not permitted to have them. We are permitted only those memories which are officially sanctioned, memories which will not jar the carefully contrived lie, the meticulously thought-out rumor. And without the memories to challenge the rumor and the lie the moral blindness continues: heaven is twisted into hell, the angel becomes the brute, the fascist the Communist. A man eager to tell the truth before his medieval inquisitors finds himself besmirched by lies before he has had a chance to speak. Because he cannot be censored he is first painted black so that if he does speak he will not be believed. The case of Gerhart Eisler is an example of the way in which a brilliant, hard-fighting anti-fascist and Communist is portrayed as a monster for fear that his word will be more convincing than that of J. Parnell Thomas, or of the paid-for, Vatican-blessed calumnies of Louis Budenz.

And to this specific atomization of the American mind must be added a new wrinkle. The spy mania has been thrust into the community not because it has any real basis in fact but because it is a useful way to divide the community, to make neighbor suspicious of neighbor. Who knows but that Mrs. Brown's young son, intrigued by atomic physics, is really an agent of a foreign government masquerading as an adolescent in knee pants? The mature human heart that looks upon the young as the stalwarts of tomorrow becomes corroded by fear that the young may know something which Mr. Baruch, the retired financier, does not want them to know. The scientists who helped build the country, provided us with a rich technology, become the objects of suspicion for carrying "dangerous thoughts."

HERE are the marks of a growing police state and the moral climate in which such a state thrives. It is part of the incitement against science, cultural growth and reason, against all those genuinely progressive developments that signalled capitalism when it was new and in the ascendant. The relationship between science and capitalism has never been an easy one but in the epoch of capitalism's deterioration the relationship becomes one of persistent anxiety leading to outright suppression of scientific interchange and freedom.

In politics darkness is not the absence of light; it is the failure to let the light through. And this is the source of the moral blindness which obstructs the vision of a good many Americans. Everything is done to keep them from knowing who their real enemies are. Without batting an eye Henry Luce can call himself a liberal; have his signature appended to a document appearing in the Social Democratic *New Leader* and address the foreign minister of a Labor government. And in turn the right-wing Social Democrat without the least qualm of conscience can join with Luce to attack Henry Wallace, who merely stressed that an Anglo-American bloc against the Soviet Union is not the foundation of a stable peace. That is why I wish that those who might be taken in by this unholy alliance had the eyes of the men who fell in Europe. They paid with their lives for the vision of a life that can be more than a mere groveling for survival.



## I FIND A NEW LANDSMAN

**"Did you ever hear of a man called Karl Marx?" Max asked. I thought he was a butcher, but I learned fast from the other butcher-boy.**

**A Short Story by YURI SUHL**

**Illustrated by Stanley Kay.**

**A**FTER working a year for Mr. Resnik, I decided it was high time I got a raise. I had become an expert chicken-plucker; I could name every piece of meat in the store; the customers thought I was a nice *boytchik*, and Mr. Resnik grudgingly admitted that I wasn't a bad *boytchik*. High time for a raise.

But how does one go about getting a raise? My father said: "Maybe you should wait. If you deserve it, he will give it to you himself. Let it be on his conscience. After all, he's a *landsman* of ours, not just anybody. A *landsman* has a good heart."

My uncle Philip, the presser, scoffed at this advice. "*Landsman-shmandsman*," he waved his hand, "he's a boss! And a boss carries his heart in his purse and his conscience in his bank book. The only way to get a raise is not to beg for it and not even to ask for it, but to demand it. If you'll wait for the boss to give you a raise you'll

get it, you know where? In the after-world."

I debated with myself which of the two suggestions to accept and could come to no decision. So I wrote a composition for my English class, entitled: "Why I Deserve A Raise." The teacher gave me an "A" for it and, upon returning the paper to me, said: "Very good, Sol, very good. I hope you are as successful with the raise as you were with the composition."

This gave me an idea. Why not show the composition to Mr. Resnik? He would surely be impressed both with the weighty arguments and good mark. After all, when a high-school teacher gives you an "A," there must be something to it. I told my father about it and he asked me to read him the composition. When I had finished, his eyes glowed with pride. "Fine, fine," he said, "that's the way to do it. Let him see that you are an educated

boy, not just anybody. He will have more respect for you. Even if he doesn't give you the raise now, it will help for the future."

The next day I took the composition along with me to the butcher store, but could not summon enough courage to hand it to my boss personally. So I slipped it underneath the check book and waited to see what would happen.

Throughout the day it managed to escape Mr. Resnik's attention. But late in the afternoon, just before I was about to go home, I found it on the floor, with his footprints heavily stamped upon it. I picked it up, took it into the back room where I smoothed it out and cleaned it up a bit. Then, when Mr. Resnik was not looking, I stuck it on a hook, right above the cash register, and went home.

The next day, when I came to work, it was still there. Every time Mr. Resnik rang up some cash in the

register I turned my head to see if his eye had caught the composition. It was not until noon, when I was in the back room plucking chickens, that Mr. Resnik called out: "Sol! Come here a minute!" I dropped the chicken and came into the store. "What's this?" he said, pointing to the paper on the hook.

"Oh," I said, forcing an expression of innocence on my face, "that's a composition of mine that I wrote for my English class."

"So what's it doing here I want to know?"

"I put it there myself, Mr. Resnik."

"Thanks for the information," he said, sarcastically. "If you hadn't told me I could have sworn that it flew in here by itself." He removed it from the hook and handed it to me. "Here, get yourself a notebook for five cents and keep it there. Around here it will get lost."

"I got an 'A' for it, Mr. Resnik," I said meekly.

"That's nice, that's nice," he said, impatiently. "Now finish plucking the chickens. I've got to get the orders ready."

By Friday I knew the composition by heart and decided to recite it to my boss when the time came for him to make out my check. But on Friday afternoon, when Mr. Resnik reached for his check book, my heart began to palpitate, my memory went blank and I barely managed to stammer out:

"Mr. Resnik."

"Yes!" He cut me short with such firmness of tone that it sounded like: "No!"

"I—eh, I want a raise," I said, and hid my trembling hands in my pockets.

He put down his pen and looked at me as though he had just heard something amazing. Then he gave a quick shrug, as one shrugs off an unpleasant thought, picked up his pen and calmly proceeded to make out the usual check for eight dollars. As he handed it to me he said: "How long are you in America already, Sol?"

"Over two years," I said.

"Two years," he repeated, and nodded a few times. "For your information, young man, you are still a greenhorn. When I was only two years in this country you know how much I made a week? Three dollars! Yes, lousy three dollars, and I was satisfied. Why? Because I was learning the business. In America money doesn't grow on trees."

The word greenhorn stung me.

"I'm going to evening high school already," I reminded him.

"Push, push," he waved his hand, "he goes to evening high school already! So what shall I do? Go out and dance for joy? And what if tomorrow you decide to go to college, what shall I do? Give you a raise for that, too? America is a free country. You wanna go? Go. You don't wanna go? Don't go. By me you are still a greenhorn, and eight dollars is plenty enough." He closed the check book vehemently, as if to say: "The issue is closed!"

On the way home I decided to quit. When I told my father about it, he held me back. "Don't throw away the unclean till you have the clean," he said. "Eight dollars is eight dollars," and he began to enumerate all the things that eight dollars could buy.

A FEW days later, as I was riding back to the store, I heard the ringing of a bicycle bell behind me. I turned around and saw another butcher boy whose face was unfamiliar to me. He motioned to me to ride over to the curb. I did and we both jumped off our bicycles. He was older and taller than me and, like all butcher boys,

had a healthy and ruddy complexion.

"My name is Max," he said, extending a massive hand.

"Mine is Sol," I said, glad to retrieve my hand from the crushing grip of his.

"I work for Zolitzky. Just started today. And you?"

I told him.

"Oh, for him," he said. It was a very unflattering "oh." "What do you do?" Max asked.

"Everything except cutting meat."

"What do you get a week?"

To myself I thought: Why doesn't he mind his own business? But there was an openness to his face that invited confidence, and a frankness to his eyes that would brook no secrets.

"Eight dollars," I said.

"Eight dollars!" he cried. From his tone of voice I gathered that I was woefully underpaid.

Max spat disgustedly. "He's a chiseler," he said, "you deserve twice as much. Why don't you ask for a raise?"

"I did. Only a few days ago. He said I'm still a greenhorn."

Max called Mr. Resnik a few dirty names and spat again.

"Say, listen," he said, "I can see by your English that you are not a



greenhorn. I'll betcha you are a school boy, too."

"I go to evening high school already," I said with pride.

"Why don't you quit and get yourself another job?" he said.

"I'm afraid," I said, remembering my father's advice.

Max smiled and put a heavy hand on my shoulder. "Say, listen, did you ever hear of a man named Karl Marx?"

I reflected a moment and said: "No. Who is he? Also a butcher?"

"God forbid!" Max said, laughing and slapping me good-naturedly on the back. "God forbid! He's a-er-well, what should I call him? A great man. A philosopher."

"Is he a *landsmen* of yours?" I asked.

Max laughed and slapped my back again. "Say, listen," he said, "he is everybody's *landsmen*. Yours and mine. But not Resnik's. If you're a worker, he's your *landsmen*. If you're a boss, he's not."

This certainly is a novel definition of a *landsmen*, I thought to myself.

"Do you know him?" I asked.

"Of course I do. He died a long time ago. But I know him just the same. Say, listen, do you know what he said?"

"Who?"

"Karl Marx."

"No. What did he say?"

"He said: 'You have nothing to lose but your chains.' That's what he said."

"'You have nothing to lose but your chains,'" I repeated to myself, wondering what this had to do with

my raise, and how anybody not from Pedayetz, or any other part of Galicia, could be my *landsmen*.

"I BETTER get back to the store," I said. "Resnik has a habit of looking at the clock."

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," Max put his hand on my handle-bar. "Don't be afraid. Let him look. Say, listen, if you want to find out some more about Karl Marx, come up to the Self-Educational Club, on Myrtle and Tompkins. It's open every night. And every Friday night we have a lecture. Say, listen, you will learn there something that you don't even learn in high school. That's number one. And number two is this: I may have a new job for you. It's in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, and if it's still open you'll get fifteen a week. It's an easy job. I know the place. I'll try to find out tonight and will let you know tomorrow for sure. Say, listen, don't forget."

He now hopped on his bicycle and I on mine. For a few blocks we rode alongside each other in silence. But just before we parted, Max turned to me and said: "Say, listen, don't forget."

"No," I said, "I won't forget."

The next day Max came to see me. But first he looked in through the store window to make sure that my boss was not in. "Say, listen," he said, as though he were continuing the conversation from yesterday. Then he looked around and lowered his voice a little: "Where is Resnik?"

"Out collecting bills," I said.

"That's fine." His voice came back

to normal. "Congratulations! You got a new job and you start on Monday morning, eight o'clock. Fifteen a week. The name is Simkin. Here is the address." He handed me a piece of paper. "Put it in your pocket."

He was about to tell me more about the new job when the door opened and Mr. Resnik came in. The way the two looked at each other, it was evident that they were not even on looking terms. Resnik walked past him to the back room, and Max gave me a meaningful wink and left.

As soon as the door closed behind Max, Resnik walked in and flashed a pair of angry eyes at me. He just stood there staring at me, as though trying to stare my thoughts into the open. Then he said: "What did he want here, the bum?"

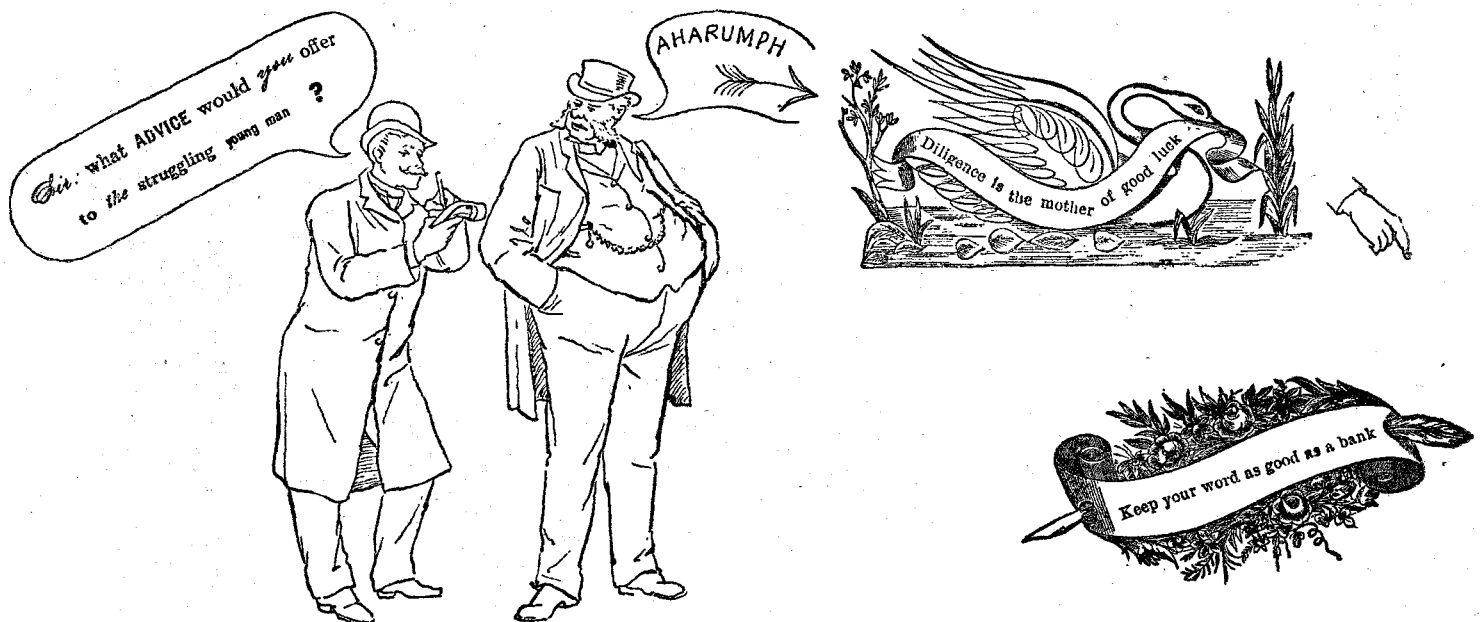
"I don't know," I lied self-consciously. "He said he passed by so he dropped in."

"Let him drop dead!" Mr. Resnik fumed. "He is a no-good troublemaker. And I don't want him to ever again cross the threshold of my store! And I don't want to see you talking with him as long as you work for me! You understand?"

My silence only invited a fresh outburst from him: "Two years ago he took away a boy from me," Mr. Resnik said with bitterness, "a nice boy, also a short time in this country. But he put his head to his work and never watched the clock. And I gave him even less than I give you." This last bit of information was imparted with special tonal emphasis.

There was a moment of awkward

## On Safari With Harari



silence between us, and when he still failed to draw a reply from me he shook his finger at me, threateningly, and said: "Remember, Sol, I warn

you!" But I was no longer afraid of Mr. Resnik.

In my pocket I clutched the new address.

From "Immigrant Boy," a novel in progress. Mr. Suhl is a prominent Yiddish poet, author of "Yisroel Partisan," a novel in verse.

## FM: TIME IS RUNNING OUT

A Guest Editorial by EUGENE KONECKY

RAYMOND RUBICAM, prominent public relations executive, wrote in *McCall's* magazine (January, 1947): "The collective impression derived from a large percentage of our press is of a gigantic advertising campaign for war . . . the scare of almost immediate war between Russia and the United States has had the vivid attention of much of the press."

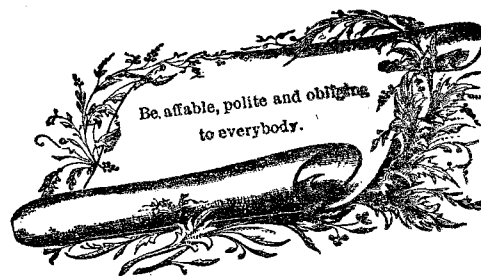
The monopoly-owned press has, in the recent period, moved into the domain of radio broadcasting. The big business newspapers have, with the aid of the Congressional Un-American Committee, driven practically all progressive radio commentators and newscasters off the standard (AM) system. They have invaded the new FM system to the extent that forty percent of the licenses issued for FM stations have gone to newspaper interests.

Henry A. Wallace recently noted that Americans "have not cared enough for liberal commentators, liberal columnists and liberal newspapers to support them vigorously." There is some justification for this criticism. But it would be wrong to believe that public apathy is the cause of reaction's gains in the press and on the radio. It should be noted, in this connection, that there was considerable opinion in the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) discussions that measures ought to be taken to protect the people against lies and distortions of the news purveyed in the monopoly press. C. L. Sulzberger, of the *New York Times*, cynically replied that the people are responsible for press lies and perversions since they buy ("select") the newspapers guilty of these malpractices.

The truth is that the men of the trusts, the corporation and cartel owners and directors, disseminate these falsehoods through their control and misuse of communications. At the same time a heavy responsibility lies upon labor leaders and the labor press, as well as all other progressives, to carry on a relentless crusade to expose monopoly control of press and radio and to arouse the people to break that control.

It is a cold, hard fact, for instance, that only five short months remain for labor and other progressive groups to file applications for FM metropolitan stations. FM has been called "labor's second chance in radio." If a substantial number of new applications for labor and community FM stations are filed before July 1, 1947, the battle against the radio monopolists will be advanced. Failure to accomplish this will be a severe blow to democracy in radio. The widest support should be rallied for such stations, particularly the Peoples Radio Foundation in New York. Such an FM station serving the New York area would have national importance for all progressive Americans.

The fight for FM is part of the general fight to prevent monopoly from repressing the great technical advances made by scientists and engineers in this field. To extend radio democracy and the benefits of these new techniques is an urgent project. Letters from trade unions, people's groups and individuals to the Senate Small Business Committee and the Senate Committee on Education and Labor urging an investigation of newspaper and monopoly control of FM broadcasting will serve to slow down the trusts in their big grab for complete control of the airwaves.



Harari.

# HOW THE FREEDMEN FOUGHT FOR LAND

**Far from being dupes of demagogues, the ex-slaves knew what they wanted—and struggled to get it.**

**By W. H. KING**

**A**N IMPORTANT part of the ideology of every ruling class is the lie that the oppressed are incapable of managing their own affairs and that they will always look to their rulers for leadership. This argument was as often utilized by the apologists for Negro slavery as it is quoted today by the apostles of imperialism such as Jan Christian Smuts.

It is to our "objective" academic historians that we owe the prevalent false notion of the role of the Negro freedmen in the turbulent Reconstruction period after the Civil War. In every schoolchild's textbook, as well as in most histories on the university level, may be found a picture of the ex-slave standing helpless and bewildered before the crushing new problems thrust upon him by emancipation. The Negro people are portrayed as pawns in the battle between two other great powers, as "herds of senseless cattle" driven to the polls to vote on issues they did not understand. This representation was tailored to fit the ideology of oppression that grew up after the betrayal of Reconstruction in 1877. It provided arguments for those who were willing to retreat from the great issues of democracy raised by the Civil War, to "heal the breach" between North and South so that Northern capital could have the whole continent for its pasture. Even today, to every effort for Negro political rights comes the spurious reply, "Look what happened in Reconstruction times."

But the truth is being slowly dug out; a reevaluation of the Reconstruction period is taking place among those progressive historians unwilling to purvey the specious *Gone With The Wind* libels in place of honest scholarship. Leading the way are Negro historians such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson and Alrutheus A. Taylor, and the Marxist historians

James S. Allen and Herbert Aptheker; while the work of Francis B. Simkins and others is rousing even academic circles.

Far from being inert, or passive, or the credulous dupes of demagogues, the freedmen were vibrant with the burning issues of the day. The Negro masses thrust forward the most revolutionary program of all those struggling for the fullest realization of the democratic goals of radical Reconstruction. To the individual freedman, Reconstruction meant not merely the return of the rebellious states to the Union; it meant most profound alteration in his entire manner of life. The outcome of the Reconstruction struggles would decide how he would thereafter earn his livelihood as well as his relations to the soil, to his former masters, and to the other groups in the community. Every aspect of the freedman's conduct and total outlook, from his family life to his status as an American citizen, was at stake. It was this impact of the new freedom that stirred the Negro people to do what prejudiced historians have refused to believe possible of ex-slaves—to give lucid expression to their demands and take organized action toward their attainment.

That the Negro masses were aroused to their destiny as few other oppressed peoples have ever been aroused is a thousand times evident in the historical sources of the period. Contemporary travelers and newspaper accounts tell of the numberless freedmen's meetings and conventions spread to the most remote rural sections of the South. Picnics, parades, holiday jubilees and countless other occasions were utilized by the freedmen for mass demonstrations and animated political discussions. Not only the men, but the women and entire families flocked to participate. Harvest celebrations were utilized by rustic orators

to urge demands of the farm folk for land. Testimony before the Joint Congressional Committee on Reconstruction told of the frequency of the assemblages of freedmen from neighborhood plantations who met after work to thrash out their new problems together. For fear of attack meetings were often disguised as funerals; an interesting item in a small-town Tennessee newspaper related that the freedmen were "preaching the funerals of Negroes who died fifteen years ago." Spontaneous street-corner meetings among the Negro masses were frequently referred to by reporters traveling through the South.

**T**HE historical tasks of Reconstruction were to crush forever the slave power and to create the conditions for a democratic South. The slaveocracy had been routed on the battlefield, but its stranglehold upon Southern life had to be broken before the democratic forces could count their victory complete.

Upon whom could the nation rely to build the new South? The freedmen arose to demand that they be entrusted with that revolutionary task. They pointed out that they had been the greatest sufferers under the overseer's lash; they had fought loyally for the Union cause at "Port Hudson, Olustee, Milliken's Bend, Fort Wagner, in the death-haunted craters of the Petersburg mine, and on a hundred well-fought fields, having fully proved their patriotism. . . ." (from an *Address To The American People, by the Colored People of Virginia*, 1865). They knew in their bones the meaning of bondage and were the fiercest haters of the plantation system. The freedmen went on to show that the effective uprooting of the old rebel power could only be accomplished if the Negro people were enfranchised and given full political rights.

In demanding possession of the land these "backward" masses, whose horizon had ended with the cotton rows, hurled forth the most revolutionary slogan of the day. If their demands had been met, the great estates would have been broken up and democracy in the South would have rested upon the basis of small holdings of Negro and white farmers. The ugly aspects of the South of today would never have come into being.

The great radical leaders in Congress, Thaddeus Stevens and Charles

Sumner, were keen enough to see the historical necessity for the confiscation of the plantations upon which the power of the slaveocracy had rested. Commenting on the Sherman reconstruction measures which passed the Senate in 1867, Senator Sumner declared: "I cannot forget . . . that there is no provision by which each freedman can be secured a piece of land, which has always seemed to me important in the work of reconstruction . . . It is true that the suffrage is given to the Colored race, but their masters are left in power to domineer and even to organize. With their experience, craft and determined purpose, there is too much reason to fear that all your safeguards would be overthrown. . . ."

Every contemporary observer noted how fiercely the freedmen clamored for land. The expectation of the freedmen that the federal government was to divide the land on Christmas of 1865 was almost universal. To make the new system of contract labor effective, officers of the Freedmen's Bureau had to embark upon a campaign of "public address and circulars widely scattered . . ." to discountenance such hopes. The bulk of the Republican Party leadership sought constantly to turn aside the demands of the Negro masses for confiscation.

It is here that our "scholars" have

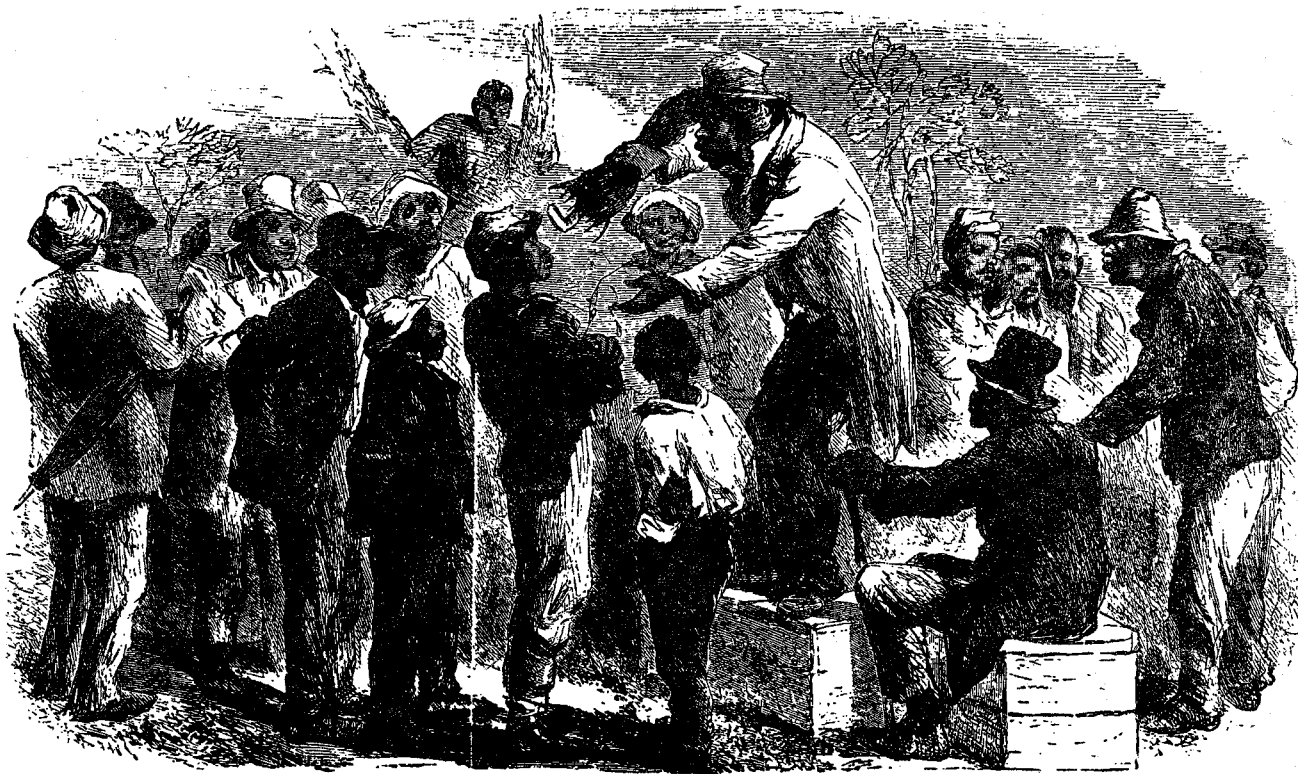
pulled the neatest coup in their whole treatment of the Reconstruction period. Instead of viewing these demands of the freedmen as they would the historical program of a European peasant uprising, for example, they spend years of research to show how "deluded" the ex-slaves were. No tale is too trivial if it shows some Negroes being swindled into buying stakes and ribbons for the day of the parcelling out of the land. No bourgeois newspaper is so purblind that its descriptions of wild demagogues inflaming Negro mobs with false promises of confiscation is unacceptable to our "disinterested" students. If this is not an example of historians looking through a periscope to avoid the truth before their eyes, there never will be such an example.

**B**UT the freedmen did more than raise a spontaneous clamor on street-corners and at harvest celebrations. They set up local and national organizations which expressed their program on a much higher political level. They organized conventions on a statewide, regional and national scale which left permanent records in the form of published proceedings.

Vilifiers of the freedmen's movement have tried to show that these organizations were dominated by whites and outsiders. As usual they

have deliberately overlooked the evidence. Minutes of the conventions, records of the executives and committees elected, newspaper reports of meetings and other contemporary sources indicate that the main proceedings of the conventions and the work of the organizations were handled by Negroes. A Northern journalist named Sidney Andrews, for example, sitting in on a North Carolina freedmen's convention, reported: ". . . with few exceptions, those who took part in the debates or were in any way responsible for the action of the convention, were not only North Carolinians by birth, but slaves by growth; . . . it was really a convention of colored men, not a colored men's convention engineered by white men."

It should not be overlooked, however, that the freedmen succeeded in gaining numerous white allies in the South as well as among the Northern radicals. Many poor whites, who had been kept landless by the monopolistic plantations, and other pro-Union elements who hated the slaveocracy as the enemy of democracy, fought shoulder to shoulder with the freedmen. In Norfolk, Va., in 1865, for example, mass meetings demanding Negro suffrage were attended by whites and Negroes, and the committee elected to carry through the fight



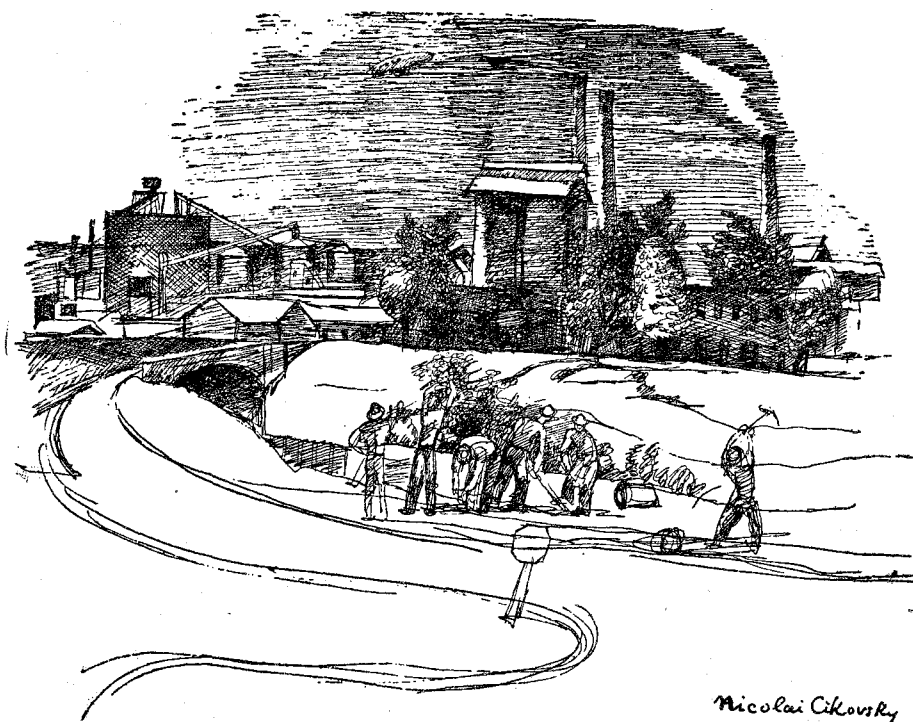
Convention of freedmen discussing their political rights. From "The South, A Tour" (1866), by John Trowbridge.

consisted of five Negroes and two whites led by Calvin Pepper, a white lawyer active in the Loyal Leagues fighting for the strengthening of the Union forces in the South.

Hundreds of unsung heroes—ex-slaves, city artisans, rural farm workers, clergymen and teachers—arose to lead the freed people. Thomas Bayne, for example, was one of the most active Negro leaders of Virginia. His heroic career included escape to Massachusetts via the Underground Railroad before Emancipation. Returning to Virginia after the proclamation he took up his profession of dentist-preacher, travelling about the countryside arousing the freedmen to greater struggles. At the same time, it should be noted that there were small sections of the Negro leadership which sought to turn aside the demands of their own people, especially the revolutionary demand for confiscation. Many in this group, branded as traitors by the masses of freedmen, capitulated to the bourbon Democrats who hypocritically posed as the “truest friends” of the freedmen when their terrorist methods were unsuccessful.

Lobbies were created by the freedmen’s organizations to press for Negro rights in state and national legislatures. Delegations were sent to present demands to Freedmen’s Bureau officials, federal military governors, and the President of the United States for protection against Klan violence and for improvement of labor conditions. Memoranda, appeals and petitions demanded representation on juries, in schools and fair treatment in public conveyances. Leaflets and circulars were distributed demanding enfranchisement and the right to hold office. Organizational machinery was developed for better contact with the masses, black and white.

Land associations were formed by the freedmen in several Southern states to organize systems of cooperative purchase and to develop Negro homestead communities. A New Orleans association, for example, sought to settle Negro farmers on eighty-acre plots sold by the government for \$30. Reporting on the possibilities of the venture, a committee pointed out the advantages of a Negro community free from Klan assaults where “You can there make an independent living . . . No man can take from you what you earn . . . it is your own,” (*N. Y. Times*, May 16, 1867). A Norfolk



Colored People’s Convention of 1865 advocated the establishment by the freedmen of a statewide cooperative fund to finance land purchases. A Tennessee freedmen’s convention of 1871 presented to Congress an elaborate scheme for settlement of the freedmen on tracts purchased by the federal government.

THE freedmen were not blind to the efforts of the plantation owners to hold down Negro labor to conditions as close as possible to the old slave system. As early as June, 1865, a Virginia Negro convention blazoned forth the following program of action for the freedmen:

“Everywhere in Virginia, and doubtless in all States, your late owners are forming Labor Associations for the purpose of fixing . . . the prices to be paid for your labor; and we say to you ‘Go and do likewise.’ Let Labor Associations be at once formed among the Colored People throughout the length and width of the United States, having for their object the protection of the Colored laborer. . . .”

Strong sentiments against planters’ combinations were voiced at the Colored National Labor Convention of 1869 held in Washington, D.C. A Florida delegate complained of a virtual monopoly by the planters who pledged themselves “to sell not a foot of land, an implement of agriculture, or a farm animal to the freed people,

with the . . . design of keeping the freedmen in as dependent a condition as possible. . . .” Resolutions condemned the wholesale disposal of public lands to railroads, speculators and corporations, which characterized national policy at the time. A scheme was again proposed to Congress for opening up the public lands of the South to the freedmen.

The lie that the freedmen were merely used as so many more Republican votes is controverted by evidence of the leading role Negroes played in pressing upon state and local party organizations resolutions for confiscation and Negro rights. It is true that the freedmen overwhelmingly supported the Republican Party in the early years of Reconstruction when substantial democratic gains were achieved by the radicals. In the later years, however, freedmen’s conventions constantly declared their dissatisfaction with the growing apathy of the Grant administration toward the problems of the Negro people.

The question of the freedmen’s support of the Republican Party was best expressed by Negro leaders such as George T. Downing who felt that the best strategy was to continue ties with the party, at the same time rallying the progressive forces within it. Warning the Republican leadership to strengthen its bonds with labor and the newly-enfranchised Negro people, he attacked the increasingly lenient pol-

icy toward the South and demanded that the freedmen "be secured in the soil which we have enriched with our toil and blood, to which we have a double entitlement." Indeed, many Negro leaders were so dissatisfied with the party that in 1872 Frederick Douglass succeeded in preventing a disastrous bolt to the Horace Greeley movement only by pointing out that "there was no path out of the Republican Party that did not lead directly into the Democratic Party . . . away from our friends and directly to our enemies."

**L**EADERS of Negro labor recognized the importance of organizing Negro and white workers together. Isaac Myers was chosen in 1869 to carry out plans for such organization by the Colored National Labor Union which expressed the necessity of Negro labor's making "common cause with the Irish and German laborer, the 'poor white' and the northern mechanic as well as the Chinese laborer." Several state-wide organizations were created under Negro leadership which fought for better conditions for urban and rural workers. John M. Langston, active in national Negro organizations as well as in those of his home state of Virginia, pointed out the lesson of unity, important to labor in 1870 as it is today. Any discrimination by labor unions in nationality, sex or color is suicidal, he warned, for it arrays against each other groups which "ought to be rather allied in the closest union, and avoid these dissensions and divisions which in the past have given wealth the advantage over labor."

Taken in toto, the historical goal of the Negro freedmen's struggles was the fulfillment of the promises of bourgeois democracy enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, the Jeffersonian philosophy and the post-Civil War amendments to the Constitution. Despite great gains, that movement was essentially defeated. Its defeat, representing a body blow to American democracy, was caused by the defection of the Northern bourgeoisie which, as always, retreated before the revolutionary implications of its own words. However, the heroic role played by the Negro people in Reconstruction cannot be concealed in spite of the efforts of prejudiced historians who crassly distort the evidence.

## TOM PAINE ON TRIAL

**Y**OU see, we are not alone in our belief in democracy! The Board of Superintendents of the New York City system has recently come by the way of believing in it too.

They believe resolutely in the right of anybody at all to do anything he pleases. As a matter of fact, they will employ all their prestige to help him.

Thus, in pursuance of this noble conviction, the superintendents have pulled the book *Citizen Tom Paine* by Howard Fast from the library shelves of the public schools and they are recommending to the Board of Education that it be permanently banned.

Are they angry at Tom Paine? No, says the Board of Superintendents.

Are they opposed to the views of Howard Fast? No, says the board; this has absolutely nothing to do with it!

You see, "someone outside the school system" informed the superintendents that there are passages in *Citizen Tom Paine* which are "too purple to be read by children." Now there you have it! The board was left with no alternative but to recommend the book's banning. (No, citizen, not *burning*. Banning.) After all, the rights of individuals must be upheld. Nobody prevented Howard Fast from exercising his individual right in creating his novel. Nobody prevented any individual from reading *Citizen Tom Paine*. Didn't more than God knows how many hundreds of thousands of individuals read it? Now why should any individual attempt to suppress any other individual "outside the school system" from expressing that individual's right to ban the book?

It is apparent that the Board of Superintendents is completely impartial—they have no desire to meddle in the rights of people "outside the school system." The board, in fact, doesn't give a hoot in hell about what is in the book.

What are the "purple passages"? None of the book's original reviewers complained of such passages. Boston never found reason to ban *Citizen Tom*. What did the "outside" citizen say about the "purple"? Did he say, perhaps, that the book is too much in the revolutionary democratic spirit of these United States? Just what did the "outsider" say?

*You see, citizen, how the board's impartiality has got it into trouble. They are now doing officially, in the name of New York City (and in your city next), what William Randolph Hearst has been trying to do in the name of reaction; the Board of Superintendents is paving the way for literary czardom.*

You others, inside the school system and outside of it, individuals and organizations, who can recognize the plain pattern of this attack on democracy, must talk up.

Let the Board of Superintendents and the Board of Education of New York know your collective and individual opinions. It is a little bit late in our history for our "educators" to be banishing Tom Paine and when it comes to books which are fired with passion for democracy our children need more, not less, of the works of Howard Fast.

MILTON BLAU.

# review and comment



## NEW LIGHT ON POETRY

***Like all other arts today, it must come  
back into the possession of the people.***

**By S. FINKELSTEIN**

MARXISM AND POETRY, by George Thomson. *International*. 20¢.

"MARXISM AND POETRY" is an illuminating pamphlet, for its fresh material and fine insights. It is the kind of pamphlet which will gratify the author not only by the applause it receives but by the quarrels it arouses, for it is impossible to break new ground in any subject without standing some old ideas on their head. Also, in breaking new ground, errors occasionally occur. Whatever my differences with Thomson, his work represents the kind of thinking which uses Marxism as a tool to discover new facets of reality. In this essay he throws new light on poetry by considering poetry in the context of the people and societies that created it. "To enjoy it fully," he says, "we must understand what it is, and to understand what it is, we must inquire how it has come into being and grown up." Such is a Marxist approach, its basis being a faith in the existence of the real world and a passionate urge to discover how things happen. Therefore the fact that this may not be the last word on the subject of Marxism and poetry should not detract from the stimulating character and value of its inquiry.

I want to stress the value of this essay because it is inevitable for a review to give more space to disagreements than to the points of agreement. The great value of Thomson's work lies in his examination of the origins of poetry, using examples from folklore and the ancient Greek. He shows brilliantly how the ideas expressed in poetry, and the forms it took, rose out

of the social function that poetry performed. Poetry was the possession of the entire community. The poet, usually not distinguished as such, was a spokesman for all the people about him. The forms of poetry were public rituals, a part of social life.

But having shown how the use of word-sound and image, the fantasy-producing elements in poetry, arose, he regards these first forms as the bases for poetry forever after. Thus, because primitive man spoke more naturally than we do in word-chant and image, he can say that poetry is a more "primitive" kind of speech than our customary spoken language. He does not mean, of course, that the poet is a barbarian. But even in the sense that he does mean it, I would differ. I do not think that there has been one single art of poetry existing through the ages, or even three single arts, the lyric, epic and dramatic. There have been different arts of poetry arising in each age, depending upon the languages that arose and the functions that poetry took on in each age.

Thomson says, "The three arts of dancing, music and poetry began as one. . . . The first step toward poetry proper was the elimination of the dance. This gives us song. Then these two diverged. The form of poetry is its rhythmical structure, which it has inherited from song but simplified so as to concentrate on its logical content." I cannot accept the conclusion that such division from dance and song freed poetry from bondage and established it as an art in its own right for all time. It is true that most

poetry as we know it has little to do with the dance. But let us substitute the actor on the stage for the dance, and we see that such a reunion with the living human being provided a wealth of new freedom and opportunities for poetry, in the form of the poetic drama. The Greek drama, which Thomson properly regards as a very high form of poetry, was not an art autonomously different from lyric poetry. It was a reunion of lyric poetry, on a higher level, with the dance, with the pageantry and human action of the stage. Similarly, we cannot dismiss the connection with song as merely a form of poetry in its birth pangs. Thomson says, "One of the most striking differences between Greek and English poetry is that in ancient Greece poetry was wedded to music." But the songs of Shakespeare's plays, no mean poetry, were wedded to music. A wealth of English poetry grew up in connection with the madrigal. Robert Burns provided a fresh voice in poetry by fitting his poems to Scottish folk songs, thus intensifying his inspiration and providing a means for putting his poems on people's lips.

Furthermore, when poets kept the word-sound forms that came from song, but dropped the song, these forms became something quite different to them. When W. H. Auden, for example, writes in ballad form, or in other complex rhymed forms, he is not producing the same kind of art as the early song-inspired poet, but something almost diametrically the opposite. These forms become to him an intellectual problem in the arrangement and scientific fitting of language patterns, for the purpose of giving order to a flow of thought that in itself has no logic or design. On the other hand poets like Hopkins and Whitman, who tried to restore the broadly communicative, prophetic function to poetry, dropped the traditional song forms as not functional for them, and so standing in the way of their communication. I am not arguing that poetry must be set to music, or that rhyme must be dropped. My point is that poetry for its healthiest growth must have a real function to perform in terms of people's needs, and an existing avenue through which it can perform that function. If it can find such an avenue by being wedded again to music, or to the stage, or to prose, this would not be a return to a primitive form or

a denial of the essence of poetry, but a new source for its growth.

When poetry, or any single art, is regarded as autonomous and isolated from the other arts, or from the general cultural picture, one can fall into the error of regarding the decline of one art as an example of the decline of all. This error, I believe, Thomson falls into: he shows the greatness that poetry reached in the Homeric epics and in the dramas of Shakespeare, and contrasts this greatness with the petty scope of poetry in the past century. "During the past half-century capitalism has ceased to be a progressive force; the bourgeoisie has ceased to be a progressive class; and so bourgeois culture, including poetry, is losing its vitality . . . bourgeois poetry has lost touch with the underlying forces of social change. Its range has contracted—the range of its content and the range of its appeal. It is no longer the work of a people, or even of a class, but of a coterie."

It is unmistakably true that the increasing bourgeois fear and hatred of culture have operated destructively upon all the arts, including poetry. But is it true that all the poets who write today in bourgeois countries are spokesmen or apologists for the bourgeoisie? Can they all be called "bourgeois poets"? Has there not risen an art, even in poetry, which presents realities not at all compatible with a reactionary ideology? Poetry especially has become an art small in scope, over-refined and precious in language. But this is due partly to the special case that poetry presents today, of an

art that simply does not function as a living institution of our society to any important extent. The result is that poets who have orientated themselves toward the common people and the struggle for genuine democracy find themselves still speaking to a restricted audience, troubled with difficulties of language and form.

TO UNDERSTAND properly what is happening to poetry, we have to re-examine the relationship of poetry to prose, which Thomson does not do except by arbitrarily assigning different functions to each. The fact is that since Shakespeare, a great part of English literary genius has turned to prose rather than poetry, and for reasons that do not lie in the inherent nature of poetry as different from prose, but rather in the function of the literary art in modern society. The epic structure of the Homeric poems and the Shakespearian dramas came from the fact that the poets considered man in terms of the full movement of history, and were able to think out such problems in terms of a form rooted in society and reaching broad audiences. When the forms of poetry lost their character as social institutions, when the natural audiences for poetry consequently declined, poetry began to lose this epic scope and to find itself faced with a struggle to preserve a rich human content. As the rise of publishing and the spread of literacy made the novel a broad, socially-rooted form, it increasingly began to attract writers with such social and human aims. The heritage of Homer and Shakespeare appears again in works such as Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, or Sholokhov's *The Quiet Don*. Thomas Hardy wrote as moving poetry in sections of his novels as he did in his works that were more properly poems. James Joyce, in his novels, is a power in English and Irish poetry as well as in prose. Steinbeck's one epic novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, is in many ways an epic poem of the American land and people.

I am not arguing for the abandonment of formal poetry in favor of prose. What I want to point out is that the decline of poetry is not due wholly to the poet's reflection of bourgeois ideas. There is a special reason, namely the increasingly meagre function that poetry has performed in society, which meagreness

has operated upon its forms and through its forms, upon its scope of human action and ideas, its language and content. When we see this, we can understand the reason for the great appeal of the Eliot-Auden school to poets today, even many left-wing poets. These men have accepted the status of poetry as a small voice speaking to few listeners, and so have evolved a fit style of fine precision and subtle allusion, with an imagery that does not recall the broad, common experiences of the every-day world.

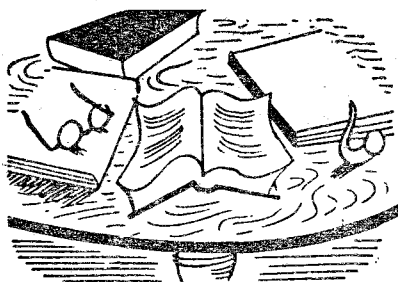
Left-wing poets, finding themselves faced similarly by small audiences, not getting the ideas about language and structure that would come if poetry did operate as a broad medium of social intercourse, begin to gravitate toward the same neo-classic finish and small scale perfection. Thus for the renewed health of poetry it is necessary for the poet not only to reorientate his art toward a content nearer to the common people, which would undoubtedly make for better and healthier poetry, but even more to strive, together with the masses of people, to recreate the cultural institutions through which poetry can again be a part of a living avenue of communication to broad audiences, and to welcome the forms such recreation takes, whether involving song, drama, the story in verse, or the narrative that is part poetry and part prose.

It may seem that Thomson is talking mainly of lyric forms, while I dwell on the epic. It should be remembered, however, that while the forms of lyric, dramatic and epic are separate, they are also interrelated. Shakespeare's dramatic poetry gave a new language to the lyric, as may be seen from his own sonnets, or the sonnets and lyrics of Donne. Milton's epic poetry also gave a new language to lyric forms. Thus today a recreation of epic and dramatic forms, reaching and interesting a wide public, may well broaden and educate the audience for lyric poetry.

IT SEEMS to me that Thomson makes parallels between the art of the past and present that are too sweeping, and therefore misleading. I find this in his discussion of the content of poetry and the kind of communication it offers. He reveals brilliantly the connection between primitive poetry and magic. "A magical act is one in which sav-



Remo Faruggio.



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ages strive to impose their will on their environment by mimicking the natural processes that they desire to bring about." The operation of magic, true of primitive poetry, is to Thomson basically true of all poetry. "By a supreme effort of will they endeavor to impose illusion on reality." He analyzes Keats's "Bright Star" sonnet as such a dream-fantasy, in which Keats, longing for the impossible, imagines that the impossible is real, and then comes back to an enriched resignation to reality. It is a very convincing interpretation of the Keats poem, but not, to me, an interpretation of all poetry. "Poetry," he says, "is a sort of dream world. People are tormented by unsatisfied longings which they cannot explain, cannot express. He (the poet) too is unable to explain them, but thanks to the gift of imagination, he can at least express them." To me, this explains only the romanticist poetry written by sensitive men who were aghast at the fraud and hypocrisy of the nineteenth century world, but could not see clearly the full realities of history. There have also been poets who laid bare reality and explained its laws, without seeking for the impossible or inexpressible.

How does Thomson reconcile this individual poet's world of fantasy with a social function? He does it by saying that this world of fantasy is itself social. "But when we fall asleep and dream, withdrawing from the perceptual world, our individuality becomes dormant, giving free play to those basic impulses and aspirations, common to all of us, which in conscious life are socially inhibited. Our dream world is less individualized, more uniform, than waking life. . . . The artist leads his fellow men into the world of fantasy where they find release, thus asserting the refusal of the human consciousness to acquiesce in its environment, and by this means there is collected a hidden story of energy which flows back into the real world, and transforms fantasy into fact. As a rule the artist himself is unaware of what he is doing. . . ."

I cannot see such a demarcation between a "personal" conscious world and a "universal" subconscious world. Our conscious acts are partly individual, partly socially governed. Our less conscious mind, or imaginative fantasy, is partly individual, partly social in content. Thomson, I think, forgets that to primitive man magic

was not merely a world of fantasy but the only means he knew to control nature, the only science he had, and a working integral part of his tribal organization. As man began to know more, to organize his world better, and to build up a science and a history, these began to take the place of magic in his social life and consequently in his poetry. The Homeric poets and Greek dramatists already combine, with the supernatural gods, a real presentation of common history and social debate. In Shakespeare there is completely present a sense of real history and of the causes for conflict within society. One can find all the characterizations, moral problems and conflicts of his great tragedies, in germinal form, in the early historical dramas in which he portrayed history as truthfully as he could. Increasingly after Shakespeare, literature took on the character of public debate and discussion, using whatever realms of human knowledge writers could find to help them. Magic, having lost its place as a social bond, lost its place as the reason for being of art.

The intense excitement an artist feels while creating, and that an audience feels before a work of art, should not be confused with the trance of magic ritual. It is nothing more than the excitement that accompanies any form of emotional communication. Since art carries on its argument through a recreation in language of human experience, it preserves this emotional excitement. But with this excitement it combines a highly conscious planning and organization, a fitting of experiences to valid social truths. Great art has sometimes been created without clear thinking, but clear thinking has always helped art. It is true that the artist seeks to embody in his art the myths, accumulated ideas and historical memories that have universal significance, but this is different from saying that he must seek these universals in his subconscious. In fact the artists today who boast of exploring the inner world of fantasy, the surrealists, are generally the most anti-social of artists.

If Thomson underestimates the conscious mind of the poet, it seems to me that he underestimates even more the conscious activity of the audience. Yet the audience is no mere heartstring to be twanged by the poet. It matches its own experiences with those the artist presents, and judges, whether it

realizes it or not, the character and depth of the artist's sense of reality. Great art is a communication that requires a conscious act and effort on the part of the audience. There have been romanticist artists who have used all the power of sensuous sound and image to bludgeon the audience, but these do not represent all of art, or the best. It is interesting that Thomson hardly speaks of the neo-classic poets, such as Pope. They likewise do not represent all that poetry can be, but they provide an important correction in their insistence upon conscious thinking by both the poet and his audience.

THIS review has not been a quarrel so much as an amplification of Thomson's ideas and a correction of what I think are misleading emphases. The pamphlet is of great importance in the description it gives of the origins of poetry, the insight it throws upon Greek art, the appreciation it offers of the wealth of poetry which the common people have created and can create. For the recreation of poetry as a great and powerful art, however, in addition to the necessity, as Thomson puts it, for the poet to speak "not only for himself but for his fellow men," he must arm himself with conscious knowledge of the laws of society, and use this knowledge to organize the experiences he brings into his art. He must make his art not only a communal experience but an education. He must see that a restoration of poetry as an epic art in our times demands the restoration of art structures within our society in which artist and audience can meet. The reactionaries of our time see this truth in reverse. They have not gone so far, except in fascist countries, as to censor the thought and writings of every artist. They allow the artist to work as he pleases—if he can hold out against starvation. But they force him to work in isolation, as an artist, from his fellow men. They have seized all the public art forms—the drama, movie, novel, radio and magazine—and are increasingly draining them of meanings, of broad, truthful experiences, of illuminating social truths: thus destroying the very basis that must exist for a real epic, educative, inspiring art. The struggle for poetry, as for all art, is the struggle for a living culture in which the public institutions of art are again the possession of the people.

## Full Stop

THE SEVENTH OF OCTOBER, by Jules Romain. Translated by Gerald Hopkins. Knopf. \$3.

THIS is the twenty-seventh and last volume of *Men of Good Will*, a cyclic novel of French and European history between 1908 and 1933. The first book introduced many characters moving against the background of Paris on Oct. 6, 1908; the last of the series employs the obvious artifice of paralleling the incidents of 1908 twenty-five years later.

Romains had been writing for twenty years when the first volume of *Men of Good Will* was published in 1932. His interest in literature had been essentially esthetic—if we can stretch a point and include a few under-the-counter items euphemistically described as "Rabelaisian." His style was polished and easy; he was imaginative, sophisticated, alert to intellectual fashions—if not ideas; an experimentalist, an artist with an epicurean attitude toward life: in short, a pillar of bourgeois culture, respected, well-liked and well-paid—deservedly so. A large audience expected a great deal from the writer who was inviting himself to a place alongside of Balzac and Zola.

The big work got off to a slow start. There were too many characters who did little but express the author's views on literature, sex and contemporary manners and ethics. There were too many characters who, like actors in a melodrama, indulged in senseless violence, emotional tantrums and comic-strip adventures in a manner so detached from reality that they rarely commanded the reader's interest or sympathy. There was also the embarrassing irritation of realizing that the two chief "men of good will" were really Jules Romain himself and that with characteristic self-regard he had described the writer part of himself, Pierre Jallez, as "introspective, poetic, subtle," and the man-of-the-world side, Jean Jerphanion, as "objective, normal, skeptical."

There were, however, sections in the first few volumes which kept the reader expectant that the novel might break away from its insipid conversations, picture postcard bedroom scenes and its pointed contempt for those members of society who did not occupy positions of importance. (Women, for example, are always depicted as

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Vol. 1, No. 5 • March, 1947

### Contents

- John Roy Carlson—Ersatz Crusader  
by Albert E. Kahn
- From Month to Month  
Jewish Rights and the German Peace,  
Sholom Aleichem Belongs to the People  
by Meridel Le Sueur
- Jewish Labor Committee Betrays Its Aims  
by G. Selwyn
- The Bright, the Golden Land (from a  
Work in Progress)  
by Harry Granich
- Sunday Afternoon  
by William Gropper
- Notes on the 22nd Zionist Congress  
by B. Jacoby
- What Is Progressive American Jewish  
Culture, a Series of Discussion Articles  
Right Ammunition—Wrong Target  
by Milton Blau
- Who Is to Blame?  
Two Poems by Itzik Feffer, translated  
by Morris U. Schappes
- Letters from Abroad  
DP Problem Can Be Solved  
by A. Raitsky
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sex-obsessed creatures whose animal natures demand the mastery of the domineering male.) But there were some memorable passages: the birth of a child, a poor little boy dreaming of life as he pushes a hoop through the streets of Montmartre, the people of Paris waking on a beautiful morning, and a superb cry against the brutality of the First World War. (*Verdun*—Vol. XV.)

After *Verdun* the let-down is complete; Romans has discovered Red-baiting. In *The New Day* (Vols. XX-XXI) he starts a persistent—and puerile—attack against the Soviet Union. His preoccupation with the status quo (nineteenth century style) degenerates into a shrill shriek in *The Wind Is Rising* (Vols. XXIV-XXV) in which he sees no difference between fascist and Communist “gangs”; both are a threat to France’s “liberal” tradition. The last book ends on a note of despair; the “men of good will” have failed, theirs is not the responsibility for the war and chaos that must follow because of fascism and communism.

The either conscious or unconscious vanity and selfishness of Jules Romans is perhaps the best key to his deterioration as a man and an artist. During the Munich days this pompous social-philosopher believed that he could save Europe from disaster by getting together with other “men of good will.” Those he chose to collaborate with were Otto Abetz, the renegade Belgian king, and von Ribbentrop. In *Seven Mysteries of Europe* he complains that he was duped by these “men of good will” and whines that he, at least, did his best to save his country from invasion. His urge to save France also led him to speak before an audience of Brown Shirts in Berlin, where he was enthusiastically applauded, to advocate “*le couple France-Allemagne*” in the salons of millionaire French industrialists, to advise the giving up of the Saar to Hitler without a plebiscite, to agitate against the Russo-French pact, and sneer at democratic procedure in his own country.

“There isn’t the slightest doubt that my general sympathies are with the Left. On certain issues I am prepared to go even farther than the men of the Left,” Jallez-Romains writes in *Escape in Passion* (Vol. XXVI). This sounds like insanity after his confessions in *Seven Mysteries*

of *Europe*. Or is it just his natural contempt for the consciousness of the people? He returned to France after its liberation and the men of the Right saw to it that this “man of the Left” was elected to the French Academy. He gave his usual pompous, arrogant speech at the ceremony accorded to new members. He called on “men of good will” to show their “spiritual strength in conquering the huge obstructions that stand between us and the future.” He moaned that we were in danger of losing the liberal heritage of the nineteenth century.

But intelligent listeners were not impressed. Said the correspondent of the *New York Times*, “Many observers recalled his efforts before the war to effect more friendly relations between France and Germany and recalled that his activities had exhibited none of the hostility toward Germany that most of his compatriots seemed to have”—which deserves some sort of prize for understatement.

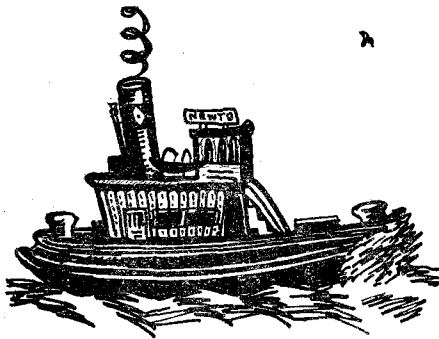
T. C. Foxx.

## African Wind

BLACK ANGER, by Wulf Sachs. Little, Brown. \$3.

WHAT happens to an African when, leaving his ancestral hinterland home with its communal life given form and meaning by age-old taboos, he comes into contact with a totally different world, the white man’s world, in a city like Johannesburg? In *Black Anger* we have the factual record of one such case, that of John Chavafambira, a medicine man (*nzanga*) of the Manyika people in Rhodesia, as told by a white psychiatrist whose professional interest in the man gradually deepened into a warm personal concern and abiding friendship. The record given us, therefore, is more than a psychoanalytical case history; it is the rounded story of a man striving for self-fulfillment in a hostile environment—in a city built by African labor and African gold and diamonds but owned and ruled by Europeans.

Although it attracted much attention in England, where it was published under the title of *Black Hamlet*, the book has been practically unknown in this country. It is most fortunate that this revised edition is now available here. I know of no other book quite like it. It will, I hope, be instructive to Americans who know so little about



F. Bagle.

the African people and their way of life; and instructive in revealing the stark ugliness of what has been done to these people.

Dr. Sachs, besides carrying on his medical practice and research in South Africa, has played a prominent role in the fight against entrenched reaction there, especially as editor of the popular fortnightly liberal review, *The Democrat*. When he visited this country about a year ago he addressed several public meetings, aiding the Council on African Affairs to publicize the facts about the condition of Africans in the country governed by General Smuts. There are doctors who know little of what goes on beyond the confines of their consultation rooms and laboratories; Dr. Sachs is not one of them.

*Black Anger* tells how John Chavambira, buffeted, repelled and almost killed by the incomprehensible world of white people in South Africa, finally overcame his fear, frustration and despondency by finding his place in the organized struggle of his people against their oppressors. The dominating purpose of John's life was to carry on the honored calling of his father and his father's father as a medicine man, a helper of the sick and maimed. It was because his stepfather thwarted this ambition that John left the village (*kraal*) of his ancestors. It was to add to his knowledge of medicine that he permitted himself to be studied by the white psychiatrist in Johannesburg.

But being a medicine man in the black ghettos of the white man's city meant difficulties, hazards and temptations unknown in his village home. His father's noble image wavered and faded as John struggled to survive in the new world of money-values. He betrayed those who came seeking his help. He fled from the city, back to his home in Rhodesia, only to return. Finally, he found how to do what he wanted to do, helping masses of people and not only individuals to rise out of their misery.

"We are a small group but our numbers are growing," says Tshakada, an African leader who became the new symbol of the people's savior in John's mind. "I know what I belong to and what belongs to me. The African worker strikes—the organized passive resistance—mass defiance of injustice—all of these are not incidents, but straws in the wind. What we want is simple enough—to take part in the destiny, in the shaping of our sunny South Africa. We're anti-nobody. We're not racialists. And we're ready to give every racial white minority full rights in South Africa. We are against violence and anarchy, but unfortunately our aims are deliberately misunderstood and misinterpreted."

In its essentials (I do not attempt to evaluate the psychiatric aspects of the narrative) John's story is the story of hundreds of thousands of Africans who in ever-increasing numbers are being transformed willy-nilly from peasants into proletarians. Thus does imperialism dig its own grave.

ALPHEUS HUNTON.

## Books Received

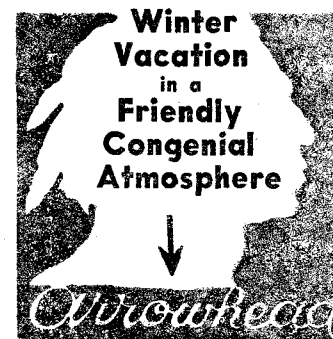
DICTATORSHIP AND POLITICAL POLICE, by E. K. Bramstedt. Oxford. \$4.75. A study of the methods of secret police forces from the time of Napoleon to the present. Special attention is given to Hitler's Gestapos and SS and Mussolini's OVRA. The resistance in Germany and the occupied countries is also described.

THE NURNBERG CASE, as presented by Robert H. Jackson. Knopf. \$3. The high points of the war criminal trials of the Nazi leaders, including Jackson's speech expounding the theory of legality involved in the indictment of organizations as well as individuals. There are many interesting excerpts from the cross-examinations of Goering, Schacht and Speer.

PROGRAM FOR SURVIVAL, by Alexander Bittelman. New Century Publishers. 15¢. The complete text of the report delivered at a national conference held under the auspices of the Communist Party; as well as the resolution of the National Groups Commission of the Communist Party on work among the Jewish masses. A most important work on the Jewish question.

OUT OF YOUR POCKET, by Darel McConkey. Pamphlet Press. \$1. A popularly-written book which brings home to the individual citizen how the cartel system affects him in his everyday life. There is excellent material on the interrelations between American and German corporations. Introduction by Senator Harley M. Kilgore.

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# sights and sounds



## "ALL MY SONS"

**Arthur Miller's new play shows a craftsman's sense of means and the artist's sense of potentialities.**

**By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER**

WHAT sensitive observers had already discerned in Arthur Miller's first play, *The Man Who Had All The Luck*—the presence of a natural playwright—is confirmed in his new play, *All My Sons*. If the advance it shows over the earlier play continues, American drama will at last know a master.

Miller has both the craftsman's sense of means and the artist's sense of potentialities. *All My Sons* has range and every step is sure. There is eloquence in it but it is made out of emotions, not out of words. There are ideas in it but they are realized in the whole action, not isolated in abstracted statements.

With minor exceptions no character in *All My Sons* takes the stage without a dramatic purpose. There are no gag lines; every word does a job. When the play ends, the characters have been so completely realized that we know not only what they were and are, but what they will inevitably become.

Miller is free, too, of the contemporary fear of ideas and of moral judgments — feared because they would lead to decision and action. This fear struts as skepticism. Arguing from the proven corrupted values of a decayed system, the skeptics discredit all social organization. Their intellectual panic has contributed to the moral stagnation of our day.

The moral judgment in *All My Sons*—or, since moral values are expressions of social values, its social judgment—is that self-fulfilment is possible only within a social frame. Chris Keller found contentment at last on the battlefield, in the mutual responsibility of the men in his company. They thought of "back home" as an extension of that

comradeship. They experienced shock and confusion when they did not find it there.

Back home this battlefield discovery is dimming out for Chris. He approaches marriage to find a substitute for it. The family situation makes the substitution urgent. Because of what has happened every application of Chris' feeling of social responsibility touches a sore spot.

His father, Joe Keller, had "served" the war effort as a manufacturer of aviation engines. Defective parts, slipped past the inspectors, had killed over a score of American pilots. Shortly after the scandal the other Keller boy, the flier Larry, was reported missing. There is no direct connection but the event has left uneasiness as well as grief. Brought to trial Keller had been exonerated and the guilt fixed on his partner.

When the play opens, three and a half years have sifted over the scandal. Joe Keller is restored to his place in the community. The plant has converted to peacetime production and is prospering. Chris' reluctance to take war profits, which has kept him from letting his name appear on the signboards and letterheads, is beginning to break. His thoughts are on the good life he can make for a wife and children.

But there is another hurdle. Anne, whom Chris loves, was the fiancée of his missing brother Larry. His mother refuses to believe Larry is dead. She scans the newspapers for the return of missing men. Every account she reads is further proof to her that Larry *must* return; she does everything in her power to impose her conviction on the others. The hysteria in

her attitude rises from her dread of the alternative conviction: if Larry is dead it will be his own father who has killed him. And to her, Chris' and Anne's wedding license will be Larry's death certificate. With all the arrogant resources of a wilful woman Kate Keller works to thwart the marriage. Anne must wait till Larry comes back because she is Larry's girl. Chris must send Anne away and find himself another girl. Joe must join her, or be exposed—as he finally is—as Larry's murderer.

This issue, when forced to a decision, blasts away the protective coverings of the three and a half years. Joe Keller must help Chris or face, in a new and heightened form, the accusation in his son's battle-born sense of responsibility. But if Joe Keller does that he must face the accusation contained in his wife's obsession.

One by one all the rationalizations with which Keller has screened himself—the rationalizations that the corrupt business world of which he is part make automatic—are cracked off, as his own family, the foundation of his ethics, become the victims and the accusers. He stands marked in his own home as the killer of his son, and the twenty other boys whom the "crazy" Chris considers all his sons. The prestige of the solid citizen, of the builder and doer, even of the good father and husband has dropped from him. He agrees to give himself up to the police and goes into the house to put on his coat. Instead he puts a bullet into his brain.

With his suicide, Keller makes the last assertion of his code. As he did not live subject to social responsibility, so he will not die by the social judgment. And by killing himself he takes his own personal revenge; he makes his own counter-charge against the family that has deserted him, that has gone against its own kind, against its own personal interest, violating the only ethics Joe Keller has acknowledged. When the shot is heard the mother turns instinctively to her son to comfort him; sensing the accusation in the act.

THE evil in Keller is not shown as an individual or an isolated thing. Keller has the admiration of his world. He is admired as a smart man for putting it over, for maneuvering a victim to take the rap for him, for having the

coolness to outface the headlines and the whisperings. Keller is seen as a part of a corrupted order.

For its theme *All My Sons* thus goes to the conflict of good and evil, the basic theme of dramatic literature, and to its purest source, the battle in the conscience. This theme, in less direct forms, has entered into every important American play produced this year, O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, Lillian Hellman's *Another Part of the Forest*, Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine*.

O'Neill, however, dealt only with the deserters from the battle, those who escape in drink and pipe dreams. For Lillian Hellman there is no inner struggle. The evil are evil, the good are good, as if by predestination. And for Maxwell Anderson the battle of

the conscience is reinterpreted as a struggle for faith, for only the convinced can win. But this is an evasion of the problem—for the evil, as Hitler demonstrated, can have boundless conviction.

In *All My Sons* the struggle is given directly and without evasions. Keller is not a wholly evil figure. He is friendly. His love for his family is warm. His neighborliness comes naturally. He is sensitive enough to feel remorse toward his partner and tries to work out recompense to him and his family. Yet his guilt is not softened down, and when the suicidal shot is heard there are few accompanying gasps of regret in the audience.

Nor is Chris the perfect knight. He too works at his rationalizations. He too seeks to retreat into the smaller,

less strenuous loyalty, the decent family life. Were it not for the support of Anne and the final proof of Larry's letter his battle of conscience might have been lost.

The important thing is that the sides in the struggle are never left unclear. The battle is between the sense of the individual and the sense of the community. The feeling of decency and contentment many Americans discovered on the battlefield must not be a peacetime casualty. It must be the principle of a world at peace.

The perfect play, like the perfect book, will never be written. In retrospect the first act of *All My Sons* seems crowded. Keller's playing jail with a little boy, who does not appear again, makes a certain dramatic point by suggesting his jail experience; but the same point might have been made more directly in dialogue with Kate. And at the point where it occurs, and in its manner, it suggests more than is intended and through that disproportion causes some confusion. And in the last act, the lines accompanying the reading of the letter that establishes Larry's death are fumbling. They prove inadequate for what is one of the climactic moments of the play. But these are minor drawbacks in a drama of outstanding importance.

From Elia Kazan the play got a sensitive direction that fully realized its potentialities. Beth Merrell as the mother, Ed Begley as the father, Arthur Kennedy as Chris and Lois Wheeler as Anne were superb in the lead roles. The minor roles were performed with equal distinction with Karl Malden, as George, carrying off with wonderful feeling a difficult scene that made the second act one of the most terrific in recent American theater. Finally, Mordecai Gorelik's setting gave the play just the intimate, neighborly backyard frame that the action called for.

A big day for the American theater.

## ART

THE gallery season is in high gear and no one could possibly keep up with all the new exhibits. First, I detoured Fifty-seventh Street in order to see the smaller galleries. The Roko Gallery is showing (through February 21) warm, intimate glimpses of city life in the watercolors and gouaches of Herb Kruckman. Some of these



"Tomatoes," oil by Pablo Picasso. 1944.

Kootz Gallery.

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papers have a fine spontaneous quality while others, notably "New York Impression," achieve a large, mural-like simplification. At the 44th St. Gallery, expertly supervised by the Perpers, I was shown a preview of a solid new talent, Saul Lichinsky. He is a genuine colorist and a witty draughtsman of flower and figure subjects. The Tribune Art Gallery features a young group, all socially aware. The group is dominated by the fine cityscapes of Edith Kramer. Joseph Rowe makes a nice combination of cubism and nature and there are sardonic drawings by Maltese, a surrealist. This show closes February 28.

Uptown, the Valentine Gallery is featuring a large display of new works by Tamayo, the Mexican painter who has long made this country his home and has contributed so well to our culture. Tamayo's is a brooding lyrical spirit, touched by a strain of symbolism. "Women Reaching for the Moon" recreates the mood of his earlier work, a reverence for the simple Mexican peasant. His paintings are characterized by great simplification of forms and a haunting darkness of color, enlivened by light earth-greens and alizarin red. The show as a whole is an important one, revealing a true poet in paint, but Tamayo might be cautioned about an increasing tendency towards an attitude of awed mysticism. It would be unfortunate if his eloquent conceptions gave way to the vaguely morbid. (Closes February 22.)

Milton Avery's show at Durand-Ruel is in the nature of a small retrospective since it covers paintings of his daughter from 1932 to 1947. Avery's freshness of vision, color and wizardry in the use of flat space are always a pleasure to behold. The high spots for me are the "Interior with Figure," the well-known "Brown Hat" and the "Cello Player." There is a poetic "Mother and Child" and its date—1934—indicates how long ago Avery might have been heralded. In his late work he sacrifices some of his spontaneity for the sake of a more schematic and severe design. The "Morning Call," however, unites both tendencies with notable shrewdness. (Through March 1.)

Hans Moller in his show of oil and gouaches at Kleeman Galleries has developed a new and lively set of pictorial inventions. His "Trojan Horse," a historical satire, is one of his best. Moller employs line with fine imagin-

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ation and poetic wit. His work is exploring wider realms of experience than heretofore, as witness the "Crucifixion." (Through February 15.)

The show of Kopman at the ACA hews to his familiar themes. With a ponderous power he trowels across his canvases thick chunks of landscapes, clowns and a humanity illumined by a kind of ferocious dignity. Kopman was painting social themes (lynchings, grotesque generals, etc.) long before it became a collective endeavor, and he retains all his former vigor. That he is a member of the Daumier-Rouault tradition is self-evident, but that he can so truly create his own world within this sphere attests to a healthy spiritual kinship. His "Success" is trenchant satire, while for sheer painterly exuberance his still life of two chickens is unique. (Through March 1.)

The late Picassos assembled at the Kootz Gallery provided a focal spot of attention last week. The critics were nonplussed. Genauer of the *World-Telegram* straddled the issue by stating there have been "a lot better" things of the artist around. Jewell of the *Times*, however, wrote off the last fifteen years of Picasso's work as a loss and described the late pictures as "horrible." This will probably not deter him from writing a monograph on the greatness of Picasso as soon as a book publisher asks him to. He has already followed this procedure in the case of Rouault, in his preface to a volume issued by Hyperion, a monument to servile hypocrisy.

The uncompromising welding of new forms and agitated emotions in Picasso's new work is responsible for the flight of the critics. If Picasso breaks apart a still life or expends his energy on a bullfight scene they will make allowances for either the experiment or the theme. But when the painter confronts them with a *human figure* projected with the same strength of purpose and feeling, they become panicky. Besides the astonishing concept and vigor of the female heads and a new, more intense feeling for color there is a portrait of a sailor which for almost sculptural impact equals any of his former accomplishments. This work, plus a large still life shown at the Bucholz Gallery, are thus far the best revelations of his late period to come over. It will be a treat to see more of them.

JOSEPH SOLMAN.

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